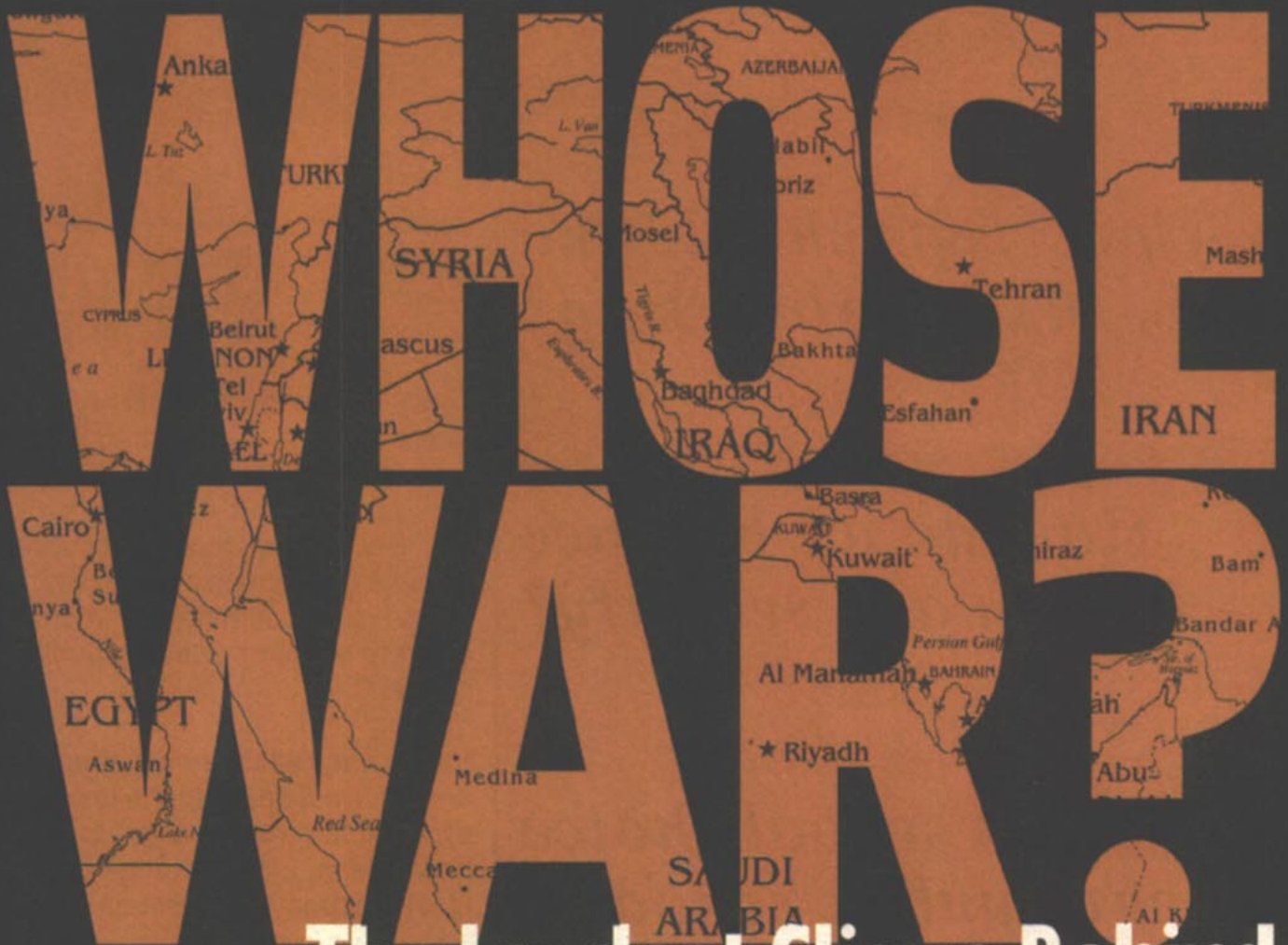


The American Conservative

Patrick J. Buchanan



**The Loudest Clique Behind
the President's Policy**





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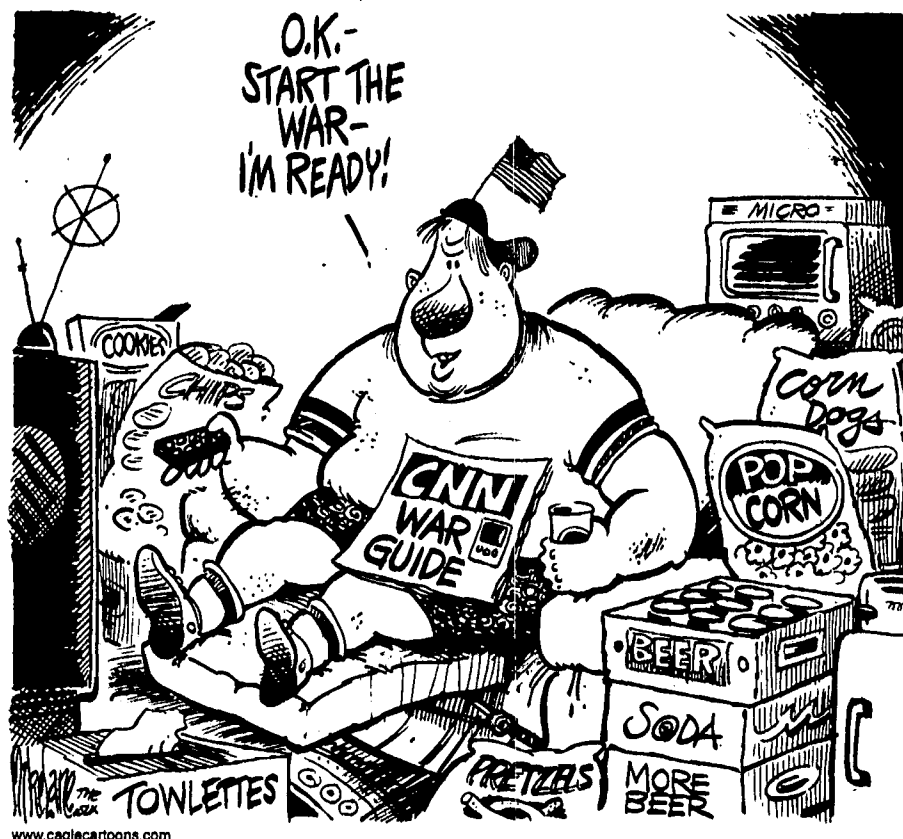
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HONORS FROM ABROAD

In February, Nicaraguan President Enrique Bolaños came to America. On his way to Washington, Bolaños stopped in Miami to present Nicaragua's highest award to two members of Florida's Congressional delegation, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen and Lincoln Díaz-Balart (who, with his brother Mario, also a Congressman now, is described by his father as "100% Cuban and 100% American," which sounds both very demanding and arithmetically impossible). According to Bolaños, the reason for awarding these U.S. Representatives the Grand Cross of the Order of Ruben Darío is their strong support for the "Nicaraguan community resident in the United States." What Bolaños really meant, as he made clear at the awards ceremony at Miami's Tower Theater, was that the medals are for helping Nicaraguan illegal aliens circumvent American immigration law and secure legal residence here.

Curiously, while in Washington, Bolaños met HUD secretary Mel Martinez. Why, exactly, does a foreign head of state need to meet the U.S. official overseeing domestic housing and urban development?

Americans were once hesitant to accept other nations' awards and decorations, except for those given in gratitude for service in our wars. That republican precedent has been eroded by such as Sirs Alan Greenspan and Rudolph Giuliani, which is our loss. It is understandable that Ros-Lehtinen and Díaz-Balart, both from families that fled Fidel Castro's Communist dictatorship, would sympathize with Nicaraguans suffering the Sandinistas' depredations. Nevertheless, the efforts to legalize Nicaraguan illegal aliens that earned them their Grand Crosses have continued long after the end of the Sandinista regime and smack far more of Republican pursuit of Hispanic votes



than principled anti-Communism. If it is too much to ask American Congressmen to uphold our immigration laws, is it also too much to ask them to decline medals for helping other nations subvert them?

[BRIBERY]

FROM THE TIGRIS TO THE RIO GRANDE

In 2001, Mexican President Vicente Fox sought a seat on the UN's Security Council, a heralded break with a Mexican tradition of staying somewhat aloof from international affairs. Today he may wish he hadn't. Fox's government is caught between Mexican public opinion, overwhelmingly opposed to a U.S.-led war in Iraq, and U.S. pressure to vote in favor of unleashing that war. Americans surprised that Mexico is not toeing the American line in the UN should know better. Opposing American positions has been a Mexican way to show independence since the UN's founding. Mexico has opposed U.S. interventions in Latin America and elsewhere, supported Salvador

Allende's regime in Chile and—until Fox—consistently supported Fidel Castro.

What should concern Americans is not Mexico being Mexican, but what the Bush administration may be dangling before the Mexicans to win their vote. In late February, the French (them again!) daily *Libération* cited unnamed State Department officials as saying Washington had again raised with Mexico the possibility of relaxing border controls along the Rio Grande and legalizing Mexican illegal aliens as a *quid pro quo* for Security Council support. Administration spokesman Ari Fleischer denied such maneuvers, but his denial leaves the strong impression that an illegal alien amnesty is something President Bush still wants as soon as he thinks he can get away with it: "The President has always viewed immigration reforms, such things as family reunification [i.e., the Section 245i amnesty] as an important priority for the United States. ... [W]ith or without Iraq, the President would be pushing [immigration reforms]. ... This, at all

times [*sic*], would be good times for Congress to agree to family reunification."

If they are considering such a *quid pro quo*, our leaders are willing to trade their nation's own territorial integrity for momentary support of an overseas adventure. What better example of the upside-down nature of the new American empire could there be?

—Howard Sutherland

[RELIGION]

DON'T BUILD THIS WALL

Many Christians observed with sorrow and unease the grim Christmas celebrations in Bethlehem three months ago. In response to a suicide bombing, Israel's army had occupied the holy city in November, and both decorations and pilgrims were scarce. Bowing to world opinion, the troops withdrew to the city limits for the holiday, but their checkpoints and barbed wire remained.

Now comes word that Israel plans to build a 25-foot concrete wall across the northern reaches of this storied West Bank town. Its purpose is to protect Jews praying at the Tomb of Rachel by blocking in the Palestinians. The Latin-Rite Catholic Patriarch of Jerusalem, Michel Sabbah, recently explained, "A door would give entry to and exit from Bethlehem. ... The building has not begun yet, but seems near." The patriarch worries that the fog of war in Iraq will blind the world to the unresolved war already raging in the Middle East: "Every day the dead and wounded are counted. People don't have work, they are hungry, and oppressed by sieges and curfews."

As another Catholic archbishop has said of American war plans, "There is a double standard. We already have a war. Why don't you stop that one before starting another one?" An equitable peace in the Holy Land would increase the security of all—including the United States—far more than would a new con-

flict advancing only one side's interests. Nobody begrudges Israel her security, but the question lingers: if her soldiers weren't occupying Palestinian land, would they need to quarantine Christ's birthplace?

[WAR]

MORAL RESPONSIBILITY

As the adjoining cartoon indicates, Americans are being primed for the pleasure of seeing their first-class military decimate the armies of the evil Saddam Hussein. Of course the U.S. forces will win, with or without access to the Turkish front. The problem is, as Jack Beatty of the *Atlantic Monthly* cogently points out, this will be the first war in American history in which success is likely to be as dreadful as failure. The White House has already voiced its intention to use nuclear weapons if necessary. Street-to-street fighting in Baghdad could generate half a million civilian casualties. If Saddam uses chemical weapons against his own people, either by intent or inadvertently while trying to stall the advancing armies, the carnage and horror will be compounded. Are the tens of millions in the Arab world who now vehemently oppose an American invasion more likely to believe that Saddam, or George W. Bush, gassed Iraqi civilians?

And if such consequences are a foreseeable result of a planned action, who bears moral responsibility for them? Obviously, the United States, as the initiator, would shoulder a good part of the burden, which Americans will have to live with for rest of their lives.

As we go to press, John Paul II's special envoy, Cardinal Pio Laghi, is coming to Washington for a last-minute peace mission to President Bush. He will stress the darkness of the repercussions of a possible war. We hope the president listens carefully and thinks again about the course that he has set upon. ■

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SOUTHERN LIBERTY

Elements of J.P. Zmirak's historical interpretation (Feb. 24) leave something to be desired. In his view, the South was responsible for precipitating the Civil War (even though Lincoln's exercise of Union authority in Southern territory provoked the first fighting), and he paints the alternative to Southern independence as "gradual erosion of Southern privileges and the slow strangulation of slavery." Is seeking independence when confronted with only the gradual erosion of political influence and rights (which is, as Madison knew, usually the means by which the theft of liberties takes place) an unworthy pursuit?

The alternative to initiating the costly long war for American independence was likewise a gradual erosion of colonial self-government. It was not the burden of tariffs but the principle of whether Parliament could levy taxes that forced the conflict. Had there been no rebellion, there would never have been any limit, however theoretical, set on the powers of government. If establishing that limit was essential to liberty in 1775, then it is unreasonable to suggest that it was anything less in 1861.

DANIEL LARISON
Albuquerque, N.M.

DEBATING PIUS XII

It is unfortunate that you chose to publish Prof. Rychlak's narrow, legalistic defense of Pius XII's conduct during World War II (Feb. 10).

The Church has preached a theological anti-Judaism that could be transformed into racial anti-Semitism: in 16th-century Spain where the New Christians were falsely accused of crypto-Judaism; and in the modern period, beginning with the Dreyfus Affair in France where Jews were regarded by such Catholic warriors as Edouard Drumont as tainted in the blood. It did not

take much for Austrian Catholics like Hitler to practice Catholic anti-Judaism as racial anti-Semitism. Goldhagen has good grounds for showing that the lukewarm defense of Jews by Catholic authorities during WWII was the unfortunate result.

Rychlak may think he is performing a needed service, but he is only following those many apologists of the Church whom Goldhagen has devastatingly revealed as deceitful. Repentance is the only prelude to forgiveness—that is good Catholic doctrine—but the Church prefers to practice Pontius Pilate's profession by asking, "What is truth?"

NORMAN RAVITCH
University of California, Riverside
Riverside, Calif.

Ronald J. Rychlak responds:

Prof. Ravitch wrote one of the very few positive reviews of *A Moral Reckoning*, and he fights hard to defend his conclusions. His analysis, however, is shaped by a pre-existing hostility towards Catholicism.

Calling Goldhagen's book a "necessary indictment of the Catholic Church," Ravitch wrote in his review: "[t]his book can help Catholics emancipate themselves from blind belief in an organization that has betrayed them and their children as it has betrayed the Christ."

He refers to "the lukewarm defense of Jews" by the Church during WWII, but that is not the way anyone saw it at the time. Newspapers in Allied nations praised Pius XII, Jewish voices thanked him, and as Sir Martin Gilbert has just written, the Nazis considered Pius "the mouthpiece of the Jews."

Ravitch's suggestion that I consider myself to be "providing a needed service" to the Catholic Church is insulting. If my work is helpful, it will be in leading Ravitch and others to the truth. Let me start by noting for the record that the Pope (Leo XIII) *defended* Dreyfus.

WE LIBERALS

On Fox this morning, during a debate between Janeane Garofalo and Brian Kilmeade over war with Iraq, Mr. Kilmeade offered a disturbing confirmation of the neocon view. By characterizing those opposed to the war as "you liberals," he revealed a sinister group-think: that those opposed to war with Iraq are peacenik liberals.

It is impossible to reconcile this assumption with the conservative commitment to our culture's free exchange of ideas. To say that all argument over war divides along conservative and liberal lines is an oversimplification that has a silencing effect on serious debate.

I guess this means that you will have to change "The American Conservative" to "The American Liberal."

DEREK KARCHNER
Arlington, Va.

KEEPING VICTIMHOOD ALIVE

Elizabeth Wright's review (Feb. 24) is fascinating to read and illustrates why we need a magazine like *The American Conservative*. Her sharp and elegantly phrased warning against "perpetuating victimhood" reminds me of Booker T. Washington's alarmingly relevant words: "There is a class of colored people who make a business of keeping the troubles, the wrongs, and the hardships of the Negro race before the public. ... Some of these people do not want the Negro to lose his grievances, because they do not want to lose their jobs."

R.J. STOVE
Ascot Vale, Victoria, Australia

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[]'accuse]

Whose War?

A neoconservative clique seeks to ensnare our country in a series of wars that are not in America's interest.

By Patrick J. Buchanan

THE WAR PARTY may have gotten its war. But it has also gotten something it did not bargain for. Its membership lists and associations have been exposed and its motives challenged. In a rare moment in U.S. journalism, Tim Russert put this question directly to Richard Perle: "Can you assure American viewers ... that we're in this situation against Saddam Hussein and his removal for American security interests? And what would be the link in terms of Israel?"

Suddenly, the Israeli connection is on the table, and the War Party is not amused. Finding themselves in an unanticipated firefight, our neoconservative friends are doing what comes naturally, seeking student deferments from political combat by claiming the status of a persecuted minority group. People who claim to be writing the foreign policy of the world superpower, one would think, would be a little more manly in the schoolyard of politics. Not so.

Former *Wall Street Journal* editor Max Boot kicked off the campaign. When these "Buchananites toss around 'neoconservative'—and cite names like Wolfowitz and Cohen—it sometimes sounds as if what they really mean is

'Jewish conservative.'" Yet Boot readily concedes that a passionate attachment to Israel is a "key tenet of neoconservatism." He also claims that the National Security Strategy of President Bush "sounds as if it could have come straight out from the pages of *Commentary* magazine, the neocon bible." (For the uninitiated, *Commentary*, the bible in which Boot seeks divine guidance, is the monthly of the American Jewish Committee.)

David Brooks of the *Weekly Standard* wails that attacks based on the Israel tie have put him through personal hell: "Now I get a steady stream of anti-Semitic screeds in my e-mail, my voicemail and in my mailbox. ... Anti-Semitism is alive and thriving. It's just that its epicenter is no longer on the Buchananite Right, but on the peace-movement left."

Washington Post columnist Robert Kagan endures his own purgatory abroad: "In London ... one finds Britain's finest minds propounding, in sophisticated language and melodious Oxbridge accents, the conspiracy theories of Pat Buchanan concerning the 'neoconservative' (read: Jewish) hijacking of American foreign policy."

Lawrence Kaplan of the *New Republic* charges that our little magazine "has been transformed into a forum for those who contend that President Bush has become a client of ... Ariel Sharon and the 'neoconservative war party.'"

Referencing Charles Lindbergh, he accuses Paul Schroeder, Chris Matthews, Robert Novak, Georgie Anne Geyer, Jason Vest of the *Nation*, and Gary Hart of implying that "members of the Bush team have been doing Israel's bidding and, by extension, exhibiting 'dual loyalties.'" Kaplan thunders:

The real problem with such claims is not just that they are untrue. The problem is that they are toxic. Invoking the specter of dual loyalty to mute criticism and debate amounts to more than the everyday pollution of public discourse. It is the nullification of public discourse, for how can one refute accusations grounded in ethnicity? The charges are, ipso facto, impossible to disprove. And so they are meant to be.

What is going on here? *Slate's* Mickey Kaus nails it in the headline of his retort:

"Lawrence Kaplan Plays the Anti-Semitic Card."

What Kaplan, Brooks, Boot, and Kagan are doing is what the Rev. Jesse Jackson does when caught with some mammoth contribution from a Fortune 500 company he has lately accused of discriminating. He plays the race card. So, too, the neoconservatives are trying to fend off critics by assassinating their character and impugning their motives.

Indeed, it is the charge of "anti-Semitism" itself that is toxic. For this venerable slander is designed to nullify public discourse by smearing and intimidating foes and censoring and blacklisting them and any who would publish them. Neocons say we attack them because they are Jewish. We do not. We attack them because their warmongering threatens our country, even as it finds a reliable echo in Ariel Sharon.

And this time the boys have cried "wolf" once too often. It is not working. As Kaus notes, Kaplan's own *New Republic* carries Harvard professor Stanley Hoffman. In writing of the four power centers in this capital that are clamoring for war, Hoffman himself describes the fourth thus:

And, finally, there is a loose collection of friends of Israel, who believe in the identity of interests between the Jewish state and the United States. ... These analysts look on foreign policy through the lens of one dominant concern: Is it good or bad for Israel? Since that nation's founding in 1948, these thinkers have never been in very good odor at the State Department, but now they are well ensconced in the Pentagon, around such strategists as Paul Wolfowitz, Richard Perle and Douglas Feith.

"If Stanley Hoffman can say this," asks Kaus, "why can't Chris Matthews?"

Kaus also notes that Kaplan somehow failed to mention the most devastating piece tying the neoconservatives to Sharon and his Likud Party.

In a Feb. 9 front-page article in the *Washington Post*, Robert Kaiser quotes a senior U.S. official as saying, "The Likudniks are really in charge now." Kaiser names Perle, Wolfowitz, and Feith as members of a pro-Israel network inside the administration and adds David Wurmser of the Defense Department and Elliott Abrams of the National Security Council. (Abrams is the son-in-law of Norman Podhoretz, editor emeritus of *Commentary*, whose magazine has for decades branded critics of Israel as anti-Semites.)

THEY CHARGE US WITH ANTI-SEMITISM—I.E., A HATRED OF JEWS FOR THEIR FAITH, HERITAGE, OR ANCESTRY. FALSE.

Noting that Sharon repeatedly claims a "special closeness" to the Bushites, Kaiser writes, "For the first time a U.S. administration and a Likud government are pursuing nearly identical policies." And a valid question is: how did this come to be, and while it is surely in Sharon's interest, is it in America's interest?

This is a time for truth. For America is about to make a momentous decision: whether to launch a series of wars in the Middle East that could ignite the Clash of Civilizations against which Harvard professor Samuel Huntington has warned, a war we believe would be a tragedy and a disaster for this Republic. To avert this war, to answer the neocon smears, we ask that our readers review their agenda as stated in their words. Sunlight is the best disinfectant. As Al Smith used to say, "Nothing un-American can live in the sunlight."

We charge that a cabal of polemicists and public officials seek to ensnare our country in a series of wars that are not in America's interests. We charge them with colluding with Israel to ignite those wars and destroy the Oslo Accords. We charge them with deliberately damaging U.S. relations with every state in the Arab world that defies Israel or supports the Palestinian people's right to a homeland of their own. We charge that they have alienated friends and allies all over the Islamic and Western world through their arrogance, hubris, and bellicosity.

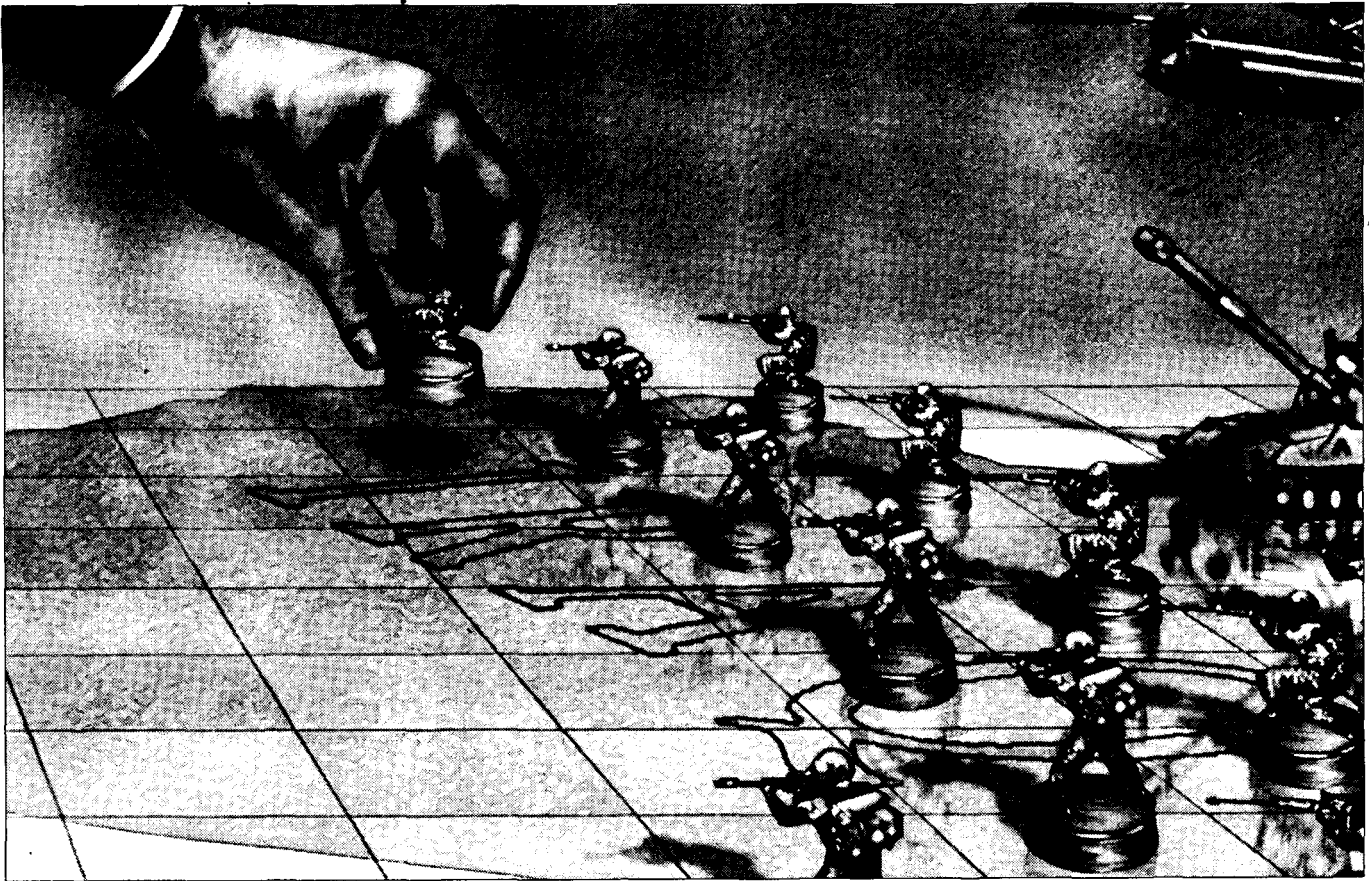
Not in our lifetimes has America been so isolated from old friends. Far worse, President Bush is being lured into a trap baited for him by these neocons that

could cost him his office and cause America to forfeit years of peace won for us by the sacrifices of two generations in the Cold War.

They charge us with anti-Semitism—i.e., a hatred of Jews for their faith, heritage, or ancestry. False. The truth is, those hurling these charges harbor a "passionate attachment" to a nation not our own that causes them to subordinate the interests of their own country and to act on an assumption that, somehow, what's good for Israel is good for America.

The Neoconservatives

Who are the neoconservatives? The first generation were ex-liberals, socialists, and Trotskyites, boat-people from the McGovern revolution who rafted over to the GOP at the end of conservatism's long march to power with Ronald Reagan in 1980.



CHRIS WIEERS

A neoconservative, wrote Kevin Phillips back then, is more likely to be a magazine editor than a bricklayer. Today, he or she is more likely to be a resident scholar at a public policy institute such as the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) or one of its clones like the Center for Security Policy or the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs (JINSA). As one wag writes, a neocon is more familiar with the inside of a think tank than an Abrams tank.

Almost none came out of the business world or military, and few if any came out of the Goldwater campaign. The heroes they invoke are Woodrow Wilson, FDR, Harry Truman, Martin Luther King, and Democratic Senators Henry "Scoop" Jackson (Wash.) and Pat Moynihan (N.Y.).

All are interventionists who regard Stakhanovite support of Israel as a

defining characteristic of their breed. Among their luminaries are Jeane Kirkpatrick, Bill Bennett, Michaël Novak, and James Q. Wilson.

Their publications include the *Weekly Standard*, *Commentary*, the *New Republic*, *National Review*, and the editorial page of the *Wall Street Journal*. Though few in number, they wield disproportionate power through control of the conservative foundations and magazines, through their syndicated columns, and by attaching themselves to men of power.

Beating the War Drums

When the Cold War ended, these neo-conservatives began casting about for a new crusade to give meaning to their lives. On Sept. 11, their time came. They seized on that horrific atrocity to steer

America's rage into all-out war to destroy their despised enemies, the Arab and Islamic "rogue states" that have resisted U.S. hegemony and loathe Israel.

The War Party's plan, however, had been in preparation far in advance of 9/11. And when President Bush, after defeating the Taliban, was looking for a new front in the war on terror, they put their precooked meal in front of him. Bush dug into it.

Before introducing the script-writers of America's future wars, consider the rapid and synchronized reaction of the neocons to what happened after that fateful day.

On Sept. 12, Americans were still in shock when Bill Bennett told CNN that we were in "a struggle between good and evil," that the Congress must declare war on "militant Islam," and that "overwhelming force" must be used.

Bennett cited Lebanon, Libya, Syria, Iraq, Iran, and China as targets for attack. Not, however, Afghanistan, the sanctuary of Osama's terrorists. How did Bennett know which nations must be smashed before he had any idea who attacked us?

HERE WAS A **CABAL OF INTELLECTUALS** TELLING THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF, NINE DAYS AFTER **AN ATTACK ON AMERICA**, THAT IF HE DID NOT FOLLOW THEIR **WAR PLANS**, HE WOULD BE CHARGED WITH **SURRENDERING TO TERROR**.

The *Wall Street Journal* immediately offered up a specific target list, calling for U.S. air strikes on "terrorist camps in Syria, Sudan, Libya, and Algeria, and perhaps even in parts of Egypt." Yet, not one of Bennett's six countries, nor one of these five, had anything to do with 9/11.

On Sept. 15, according to Bob Woodward's *Bush at War*, "Paul Wolfowitz put forth military arguments to justify a U.S. attack on Iraq rather than Afghanistan." Why Iraq? Because, Wolfowitz argued in the War Cabinet, while "attacking Afghanistan would be uncertain ... Iraq was a brittle oppressive regime that might break easily. It was doable."

On Sept. 20, forty neoconservatives sent an open letter to the White House instructing President Bush on how the war on terror must be conducted. Signed by Bennett, Podhoretz, Kirkpatrick, Perle, Kristol, and *Washington Post* columnist Charles Krauthammer, the letter was an ultimatum. To retain the signers' support, the president was told, he must target Hezbollah for destruction, retaliate against Syria and Iran if they refuse to sever ties to Hezbollah, and overthrow Saddam. Any failure to attack Iraq, the signers warned Bush, "will constitute an early and perhaps decisive surrender in the war on international terrorism."

Here was a cabal of intellectuals telling the Commander-in-Chief, nine days after an attack on America, that if he did not follow their war plans, he would be charged with surrendering to terror. Yet, Hezbollah had nothing to do with 9/11. What had Hezbollah done?

Hezbollah had humiliated Israel by driving its army out of Lebanon.

President Bush had been warned. He was to exploit the attack of 9/11 to launch a series of wars on Arab regimes, none of which had attacked us. All, however, were enemies of Israel. "Bibi" Netanyahu, the former Prime Minister of Israel, like some latter-day Citizen Genet, was ubiquitous on American television, calling for us to crush the "Empire of Terror." The "Empire," it turns out, consisted of Hamas, Hezbollah, Iran, Iraq, and "the Palestinian enclave."

Nasty as some of these regimes and groups might be, what had they done to the United States?

The War Party seemed desperate to get a Middle East war going before America had second thoughts. Tom Donnelly of the Project for the New American Century (PNAC) called for an immediate invasion of Iraq. "Nor need the attack await the deployment of half a million troops. ... [T]he larger challenge will be occupying Iraq after the fighting is over," he wrote.

Donnelly was echoed by Jonah Goldberg of *National Review*: "The United States needs to go to war with Iraq because it needs to go to war with someone in the region and Iraq makes the most sense."

Goldberg endorsed "the Ledeen Doctrine" of ex-Pentagon official Michael Ledeen, which Goldberg described thus: "Every ten years or so, the United States needs to pick up some small crappy little country and throw it against the wall, just to show we mean business." (When the French ambassador in London, at a dinner party, asked why we should risk World War III over some "shitty little country"—meaning Israel—Goldberg's magazine was not amused.)

Ledeen, however, is less frivolous. In *The War Against the Terror Masters*, he identifies the exact regimes America must destroy:

First and foremost, we must bring down the terror regimes, beginning with the Big Three: Iran, Iraq, and Syria. And then we have to come to grips with Saudi Arabia. ... Once the tyrants in Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Saudi Arabia have been brought down, we will remain engaged. ... We have to ensure the fulfillment of the democratic revolution. ... Stability is an unworthy American mission, and a misleading concept to boot. We do not want stability in Iran, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and even Saudi Arabia; we want things to change. The real issue is not whether, but how to destabilize.

Rejecting stability as "an unworthy American mission," Ledeen goes on to define America's authentic "historic mission":

Creative destruction is our middle name, both within our society and abroad. We tear down the old order every day, from business to science, literature, art, architecture, and cinema to politics and the law. Our enemies have always hated this whirlwind of energy and creativity which menaces

their traditions (whatever they may be) and shames them for their inability to keep pace. ... [W]e must destroy them to advance our historic mission.

Passages like this owe more to Leon Trotsky than to Robert Taft and betray a Jacobin streak in neoconservatism that cannot be reconciled with any concept of true conservatism.

To the *Weekly Standard*, Ledeen's enemies list was too restrictive. We must not only declare war on terror networks and states that harbor terrorists, said the *Standard*, we should launch wars on "any group or government inclined to support or sustain others like them in the future."

Robert Kagan and William Kristol were giddy with excitement at the prospect of Armageddon. The coming war "is going to spread and engulf a number of countries. ... It is going to resemble the clash of civilizations that everyone has hoped to avoid. ... [I]t is possible that the demise of some 'moderate' Arab regimes may be just round the corner."

Norman Podhoretz in *Commentary* even outdid Kristol's *Standard*, rhapsodizing that we should embrace a war of civilizations, as it is George W. Bush's mission "to fight World War IV—the war against militant Islam." By his count, the regimes that richly deserve to be overthrown are not confined to the three singled-out members of the axis of evil (Iraq, Iran, North Korea). At a minimum, the axis should extend to Syria and Lebanon and Libya, as well as "friends" of America like the Saudi royal family and Egypt's Hosni Mubarak, along with the Palestinian Authority. Bush must reject the "timorous counsels" of the "incorrigibly cautious Colin Powell," wrote Podhoretz, and "find the stomach to impose a new political culture on the defeated" Islamic world. As the war

against al-Qaeda required that we destroy the Taliban, Podhoretz wrote,

We may willy-nilly find ourselves forced ... to topple five or six or seven more tyrannies in the Islamic world (including that other sponsor of terrorism, Yasir Arafat's Palestinian Authority). I can even [imagine] the turmoil of this war leading to some new species of an imperial mission for America, whose purpose would be to oversee the emergence of successor governments in the region more amenable to reform and modernization than the despotisms now in place. ... I can also envisage the establishment of some kind of American protectorate over the oil fields of Saudi Arabia, as we more and more come to wonder why 7,000 princes should go on being permitted to exert so much leverage over us and everyone else.

Podhoretz credits Eliot Cohen with the phrase "World War IV." Bush was shortly thereafter seen carrying about a gift copy of Cohen's book that celebrates civilian mastery of the military in times of war, as exhibited by such leaders as Winston Churchill and David Ben Gurion.

A list of the Middle East regimes that

Cui Bono? For whose benefit these endless wars in a region that holds nothing vital to America save oil, which the Arabs must sell us to survive? Who would benefit from a war of civilizations between the West and Islam?

Answer: one nation, one leader, one party. Israel, Sharon, Likud.

Indeed, Sharon has been everywhere the echo of his acolytes in America. In February 2003, Sharon told a delegation of Congressmen that, after Saddam's regime is destroyed, it is of "vital importance" that the United States disarm Iran, Syria, and Libya.

"We have a great interest in shaping the Middle East the day after" the war on Iraq, Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz told the Conference of Major American Jewish Organizations. After U.S. troops enter Baghdad, the United States must generate "political, economic, diplomatic pressure" on Tehran, Mofaz admonished the American Jews.

Are the neoconservatives concerned about a war on Iraq bringing down friendly Arab governments? Not at all. They would welcome it.

"Mubarak is no great shakes," says Richard Perle of the President of Egypt. "Surely we can do better than Mubarak." Asked about the possibility that a war on Iraq—which he predicted would be a "cakewalk"—might upend governments in Egypt and Saudi Arabia, former UN

WHO WOULD BENEFIT FROM A WAR OF CIVILIZATIONS BETWEEN THE WEST AND ISLAM? ANSWER: ONE NATION, ONE LEADER, ONE PARTY. ISRAEL, SHARON, LIKUD.

Podhoretz, Bennett, Ledeon, Netanyahu, and the *Wall Street Journal* regard as targets for destruction thus includes Algeria, Libya, Egypt, Sudan, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Hezbollah, Hamas, the Palestinian Authority, and "militant Islam."

ambassador Ken Adelman told Joshua Micah Marshall of *Washington Monthly*, "All the better if you ask me."

On July 10, 2002, Perle invited a former aide to Lyndon LaRouche named Laurent Murawiec to address the Defense Policy Board. In a briefing that

startled Henry Kissinger, Murawiec named Saudi Arabia as “the kernel of evil, the prime mover, the most dangerous opponent” of the United States.

Washington should give Riyadh an ultimatum, he said. Either you Saudis “prosecute or isolate those involved in the terror chain, including the Saudi intelligence services,” and end all propaganda against Israel, or we invade your country, seize your oil fields, and occupy Mecca.

THE NEOCONS SEEK AMERICAN EMPIRE, AND SHARONITES SEEK HEGEMONY OVER THE MIDDLE EAST. THE TWO AGENDAS COINCIDE PRECISELY.

In closing his PowerPoint presentation, Murawiec offered a “Grand Strategy for the Middle East.” “Iraq is the tactical pivot, Saudi Arabia the strategic pivot, Egypt the prize.” Leaked reports of Murawiec’s briefing did not indicate if anyone raised the question of how the Islamic world might respond to U.S. troops tramping around the grounds of the Great Mosque.

What these neoconservatives seek is to conscript American blood to make the world safe for Israel. They want the peace of the sword imposed on Islam and American soldiers to die if necessary to impose it.

Washington Times editor at large Arnaud de Borchgrave calls this the “Bush-Sharon Doctrine.” “Washington’s ‘Likudniks,’” he writes, “have been in charge of U.S. policy in the Middle East since Bush was sworn into office.”

The neocons seek American empire, and Sharonites seek hegemony over the Middle East. The two agendas coincide precisely. And though neocons insist that it was Sept. 11 that made the case for war on Iraq and militant Islam, the origins of their war plans go back far before.

“Securing the Realm”

The principal draftsman is Richard Perle, an aide to Sen. Scoop Jackson, who, in 1970, was overheard on a federal wiretap discussing classified information from the National Security Council with the Israeli Embassy. In *Jews and American Politics*, published in 1974, Stephen D. Isaacs wrote, “Richard Perle and Morris Amitay command a tiny army of Semitophiles on Capitol Hill and direct Jewish

power in behalf of Jewish interests.” In 1983, the *New York Times* reported that Perle had taken substantial payments from an Israeli weapons manufacturer.

In 1996, with Douglas Feith and David Wurmser, Perle wrote “A Clean Break: A New Strategy for Securing the Realm,” for Prime Minister Netanyahu. In it, Perle, Feith, and Wurmser urged Bibi to ditch the Oslo Accords of the assassinated Yitzhak Rabin and adopt a new aggressive strategy:

Israel can shape its strategic environment, in cooperation with Turkey and Jordan, by weakening, containing, and even rolling back Syria. This effort can focus on removing Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq—an important Israeli strategic objective in its own right—as a means of foiling Syria’s regional ambitions. Jordan has challenged Syria’s regional ambitions recently by suggesting the restoration of the Hashemites in Iraq.

In the Perle-Feith-Wurmser strategy, Israel’s enemy remains Syria, but the

road to Damascus runs through Baghdad. Their plan, which urged Israel to re-establish “the principle of preemption,” has now been imposed by Perle, Feith, Wurmser & Co. on the United States.

In his own 1997 paper, “A Strategy for Israel,” Feith pressed Israel to re-occupy “the areas under Palestinian Authority control,” though “the price in blood would be high.”

Wurmser, as a resident scholar at AEI, drafted joint war plans for Israel and the United States “to fatally strike the centers of radicalism in the Middle East. Israel and the United States should ... broaden the conflict to strike fatally, not merely disarm, the centers of radicalism in the region—the regimes of Damascus, Baghdad, Tripoli, Tehran, and Gaza. That would establish the recognition that fighting either the United States or Israel is suicidal.”

He urged both nations to be on the lookout for a crisis, for as he wrote, “Crises can be opportunities.” Wurmser published his U.S.-Israeli war plan on Jan. 1, 2001, *nine months before 9/11*.

About the Perle-Feith-Wurmser cabal, author Michael Lind writes:

The radical Zionist right to which Perle and Feith belong is small in number but it has become a significant force in Republican policy-making circles. It is a recent phenomenon, dating back to the late 1970s and 1980s, when many formerly Democratic Jewish intellectuals joined the broad Reagan coalition. While many of these hawks speak in public about global crusades for democracy, the chief concern of many such “neo-conservatives” is the power and reputation of Israel.

Right down the smokestack.

Perle today chairs the Defense Policy Board, Feith is an Undersecretary of Defense, and Wurmser is special assistant

to the Undersecretary of State for Arms Control, John Bolton, who dutifully echoes the Perle-Sharon line. According to the Israeli daily newspaper *Ha'aretz*, in late February,

U.S. Undersecretary of State John Bolton said in meetings with Israeli officials ... that he has no doubt America will attack Iraq and that it will be necessary to deal with threats from Syria, Iran and North Korea afterwards.

On Jan. 26, 1998, President Clinton received a letter imploring him to use his State of the Union address to make removal of Saddam Hussein's regime the "aim of American foreign policy" and to use military action because "diplomacy is failing." Were Clinton to do that, the signers pledged, they would "offer our full support in this difficult but necessary endeavor." Signing the pledge were Elliott Abrams, Bill Bennett, John Bolton, Robert Kagan, William Kristol, Richard Perle, and Paul Wolfowitz. Four years before 9/11, the neocons had Baghdad on their minds.

The Wolfowitz Doctrine

In 1992, a startling document was leaked from the office of Paul Wolfowitz at the Pentagon. Barton Gellman of the *Washington Post* called it a "classified blueprint intended to help 'set the nation's direction for the next century.'" The Wolfowitz Memo called for a permanent U.S. military presence on six continents to deter all "potential competitors from even aspiring to a larger regional or global role." Containment, the victorious strategy of the Cold War, was to give way to an ambitious new strategy designed to "establish and protect a new order."

Though the Wolfowitz Memo was denounced and dismissed in 1992, it

became American policy in the 33-page National Security Strategy (NSS) issued by President Bush on Sept. 21, 2002. *Washington Post* reporter Tim Reich describes it as a "watershed in U.S. foreign policy" that "reverses the fundamental principles that have guided successive Presidents for more than 50 years: containment and deterrence."

Andrew Bacevich, a professor at Boston University, writes of the NSS that he marvels at "its fusion of breath-taking utopianism with barely disguised *machtpolitik*. It reads as if it were the product not of sober, ostensibly conservative Republicans but of an unlikely collaboration between Woodrow Wilson and the elder Field Marshal von Moltke."

In confronting America's adversaries, the paper declares, "We will not hesitate to act alone, if necessary, to exercise our right of self-defense by acting preemptively." It warns any nation that seeks to acquire power to rival the United States that it will be courting war with the United States:

[T]he president has no intention of allowing any nation to catch up with the huge lead the United States has opened since the fall of the Soviet Union more than a decade ago. ... Our forces will be strong enough to dissuade potential adversaries from pursuing a military buildup in hopes of surpassing or equaling the power of the United States.

America must reconcile herself to an era of "nation-building on a grand scale, and with no exit strategy," Robert Kagan instructs. But this *Pax Americana* the neocons envision bids fair to usher us into a time of what Harry Elmer Barnes called "permanent war for permanent peace."

The Munich Card

As President Bush was warned on Sept. 20, 2001, that he will be indicted for "a decisive surrender" in the war on terror should he fail to attack Iraq, he is also on notice that pressure on Israel is forbidden. For as the neoconservatives have played the anti-Semitic card, they will not hesitate to play the Munich card as well. A year ago, when Bush called on Sharon to pull out of the West Bank, Sharon fired back that he would not let anyone do to Israel what Neville Chamberlain had done to the Czechs. Frank Gaffney of the Center for Security Policy immediately backed up Ariel Sharon:

With each passing day, Washington appears to view its principal Middle Eastern ally's conduct as inconvenient—in much the same way London and Paris came to see Czechoslovakia's resistance to Hitler's offers of peace in exchange for Czech lands.

When former U.S. NATO commander Gen. George Jouwlan said the United States may have to impose a peace on Israel and the Palestinians, he, too, faced the charge of appeasement. Wrote Gaffney,

They would, presumably, go beyond Britain and France's sell-out of an ally at Munich in 1938. The "impose a peace" school is apparently prepared to have us play the role of Hitler's Wehrmacht as well, seizing and turning over to Yasser Arafat the contemporary Sudetenland: the West Bank and Gaza Strip and perhaps part of Jerusalem as well.

Podhoretz agreed Sharon was right in the substance of what he said but called it politically unwise to use the Munich analogy.

President Bush is on notice: Should he pressure Israel to trade land for peace, the Oslo formula in which his father and Yitzak Rabin believed, he will, as was his father, be denounced as an anti-Semite and a Munich-style appeaser by both Israelis and their neoconservative allies inside his own Big Tent.

Yet, if Bush cannot deliver Sharon there can be no peace. And if there is no peace in the Mideast there is no security for us, ever—for there will be no end to terror. As most every diplomat and journalist who travels to the region will relate, America's failure to be even-handed, our failure to rein in Sharon, our failure to condemn Israel's excesses, and our moral complicity in Israel's looting of Palestinian lands and denial of their

right to self-determination sustains the anti-Americanism in the Islamic world in which terrorists and terrorism breed.

Let us conclude. The Israeli people are America's friends and have a right to peace and secure borders. We should help them secure these rights. As a nation, we have made a moral commitment, endorsed by half a dozen presidents, which Americans wish to honor, not to permit these people who have suffered much to see their country overrun and destroyed. And we must honor this commitment.

But U.S. and Israeli interests are not identical. They often collide, and when they do, U.S. interests must prevail. Moreover, we do not view the Sharon regime as "America's best friend."

Since the time of Ben Gurion, the behavior of the Israeli regime has been Jekyll and Hyde. In the 1950s, its intelligence service, the Mossad, had agents in Egypt blow up U.S. installations to make it appear the work of Cairo, to destroy U.S. relations with the new Nasser government. During the Six Day War, Israel ordered repeated attacks on the undefended USS Liberty that killed 34 American sailors and wounded 171 and included the machine-gunning of life rafts. This massacre was neither investigated nor punished by the U.S. government in an act of national cravenness.

Though we have given Israel \$20,000 for every Jewish citizen, Israel refuses to stop building the settlements that are the cause of the Palestinian *intifada*. Likud has dragged our good name through the mud and blood of Ramallah, ignored Bush's requests to restrain itself, and sold U.S. weapons technology to China, including the Patriot, the Phoenix air-to-air missile, and the Lavi fighter, which is based on F-16 technology. Only direct U.S. intervention blocked Israel's sale of our AWACS system.

Israel suborned Jonathan Pollard to loot our secrets and refuses to return the documents, which would establish whether or not they were sold to Moscow. When Clinton tried to broker an agreement at Wye Plantation between Israel and Arafat, Bibi Netanyahu attempted to extort, as his price for signing, release of Pollard, so he could take this treasonous snake back to Israel as a national hero.

Do the Brits, our closest allies, behave like this?

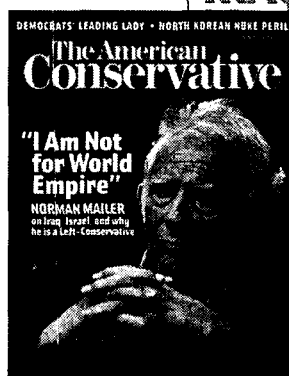
Though we have said repeatedly that we admire much of what this president has done, he will not deserve re-election if he does not jettison the neoconservatives' agenda of endless wars on the Islamic world that serve only the interests of a country other than the one he was elected to preserve and protect. ■

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Afghanistan: The Victory That Wasn't

Far from being a model for a "liberated" Iraq, Afghanistan shows how the U.S. can get bogged down Soviet-style.

By Eric S. Margolis

FOR THOSE WORRIED that an American-occupied Iraq might become a quagmire, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld offered reassuring words on Valentine's Day. The success story of U.S.-administered Afghanistan, he announced, will serve as a model for the new, "liberated" Iraq.

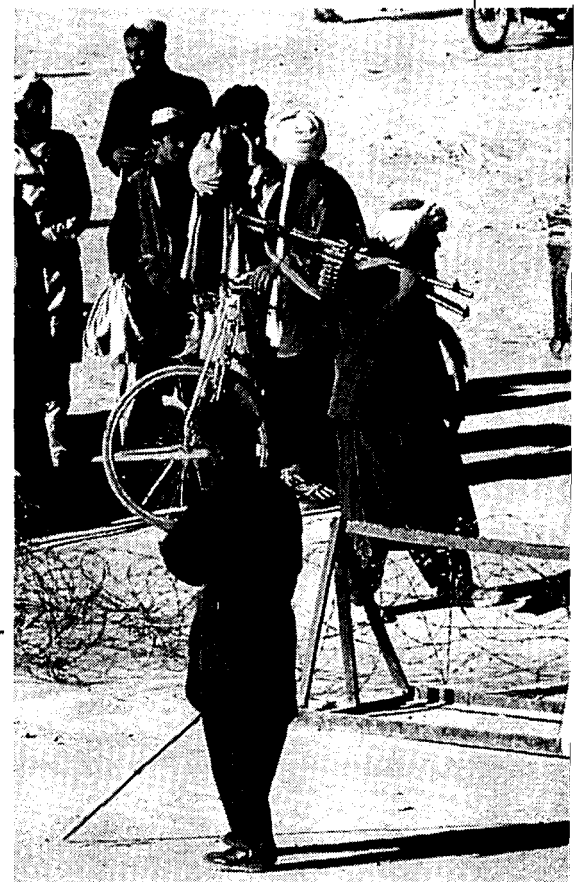
Operation Enduring Freedom—the rapid conquest of Afghanistan in October 2001—indeed showed that small numbers of highly mobile, electronically linked U.S. troops, using local mercenaries and devastating airpower, could swiftly crush a primitive opponent bereft of air or ground cover, with only minimal American losses.

The lightning campaign that overthrew the Taliban and dispersed al-Qaeda's 300-odd fighters, as well as a score of other militant Islamic groups, was greeted as a triumph by the two driving forces behind President George W. Bush's increasingly aggressive and unilateralist foreign policy: the Rumsfeld-Cheney Manifest Destiny crowd and militant Israel lobbyists, whose Grand Ayatollahs, Norman Podhoretz and

Richard Perle, have been preaching "World War IV" against Islam. Kabul was the first step on a crusade against Baghdad, Beirut, Damascus, and Tripoli.

Ask most Americans about Afghanistan, and they will tell you that George Bush overthrew the "evil" Taliban regime in a bloodless victory, liberated its people from feudalism and superstition, freed Afghan women, and brought democracy and good government to that benighted nation. Such is the rosy portrait promoted by the administration and ceaselessly amplified by the American media, which since 9/11 too often recalls the fawning Soviet media in the days of Chairman Leonid Brezhnev.

This image of "liberated" Afghanistan, where the natives abjure militant Islam and wave little American flags, is certainly what Donald Rumsfeld would like to see repeated in "liberated" Iraq. The problem is that this is a Potemkin-Village fantasy. In reality, Afghanistan today is a dangerous, seething mess that is probably dragging the 10,000 American occupation troops garrisoned there ever deeper into an ugly, bloody, low-



intensity guerilla war: a dark portent of what may happen if the U.S. invades Iraq and makes it into a military colony.

To understand what is really happening in Afghanistan, go back to 1998. The mainly Pushtun Taliban, an obscurantist religious movement backed by Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, had brought order to war-racked Afghanistan and driven its bitter foe, the Russian- and Iranian-backed Northern Alliance, into the

ALL PHOTOGRAPHS UP

remote northeast. The Alliance, composed of ethnic Uzbeks and Tajiks, was the rump of the old Afghan Communist Party that had been overthrown by the U.S.-backed *mujihadin* in the early 1990s. Led by the mediagenic Ahmad Shah Massoud, who had defected to the Soviets in the mid-1980s, the Alliance was armed by Moscow and Tehran. Its chieftans controlled 90 percent of the nation's poppy-morphine-heroin trade.



Washington conducted secret talks with the Taliban from the time it seized Kabul in 1996 and began quietly providing the Islamic regime with a few hundred million dollars annually. The Clinton administration had two objectives: 1) a deal with the Taliban to allow the American Unocal oil company to build a pipeline from Uzbekistan south to Karachi, Pakistan; and 2) possibly using the Taliban, which hosted Islamic resistance groups from numerous nations—notably the neo-communist Central Asian states and Uigher Muslims from Xinjiang (Sinkiang), China—as a weapon against America's then enemy number one, China.

Osama bin Laden, who returned to Afghanistan in 1998, was barely noticed by the United States, in spite of his calls for *jihad* against "Crusaders and Jews." Bin Laden, who had extensive business

experience, advised the Taliban's unworldly rustics to reject Unocal's pipeline deal in favor of a better offer from a Latin American consortium. Washington was furious and began contingency plans to invade Afghanistan. But U.S. aid continued to flow to the Taliban until May 2001, four months before the attacks of Sept. 11.

That horrifying and humiliating event caused the Bush administration to order an invasion of Afghanistan and, we now learn, a war against Iraq, though Baghdad had nothing to do with the 9/11 attacks. The U.S. and Russia concluded an agreement to co-ordinate the overthrow of the Taliban.

Russia's role in the campaign was decisive. Moscow delivered \$600 million of tanks, artillery, helicopters, and armored vehicles to the Alliance and sent hundreds of technicians and "advisors" to flesh out its ranks.

Troops from a Russian division based in neighboring Tajikistan donned new Alliance uniforms provided by Iran.

The Chief of the Russian General Staff, Marshall Kvashnin, was dispatched by President Vladimir Putin to direct the Alliance's offensive against the Taliban. Alliance troops tied down entrenched Taliban forces, making them perfect targets for U.S. B-52 bombers and strike aircraft, which dropped 12,000 heavy bombs in a single month on the hapless talibs, who lacked any air defenses, and, accidentally, on sizeable numbers of Afghan civilians.

Pakistan, warned by Washington to turn against the Taliban or face financial ruin, greatly aided the campaign by using its crack intelligence agency, ISI, to bribe Afghan tribal chiefs with some \$500 million in cash to ditch the Taliban and side with the Americans.

After resisting for weeks, Taliban leader Mullah Omar ordered his men to abandon Kabul and scatter to the mountains. Northern Alliance forces and their Russian commanders rolled unopposed into the capital, thus reversing, at least by half, the Soviet defeat in 1989. But the U.S. embarrassingly failed to attain its primary goal: capturing or killing bin Laden and Mullah Omar. Afghan mercenaries hired by the U.S. to flush out Osama bin Laden and about 100 fighters from Tora Bora allowed them to escape, doubtlessly for cash consideration.

Between 1,000 and 3,000 captured Taliban troops were massacred by Alliance leader Gen. Rashid Dostam, a pillar of the old Afghan communist regime and major war criminal. U.S. Special Forces allegedly watched or even supervised the massacres.

The Alliance took power in Kabul and immediately restored the drug trade. The Taliban had almost eradicated poppy production, the dirt-poor nation's only cash crop. Under the Alliance, America's new ally, production soared, according to UN and British anti-drug monitors, from 185 tons *per annum* to 2,700 tons. American DEA agents in Pakistan and Afghanistan were ordered to shut their eyes to the outflow of morphine base, which supplied 85 percent of Europe's and 25 percent of America's heroin. President Bush's war on drugs had collided with his war on terror—and lost. Once again, as in Indochina and Central America, the U.S. found itself colluding in the drug trade.

The CIA produced an old Afghan "asset," Hamid Karzai. Another "asset" (and old comrade in arms of this writer from the 1980s war against the Soviets), Abdul Haq, had been the CIA's original selection to become leader of "liberated" Afghanistan. But Haq was captured and hanged by the Taliban. So Karzai was chosen. This suave, eloquent former government official proved a far

more polished and compliant representative of U.S. interests than the impetuous, plain spoken, and too independent-minded Haq.

In his trademark green cloak, speaking flawless English, and saying all the right things about democracy, the evils of militant Islam, and women's rights, Karzai proved a master of public relations. He was lionized by the U.S. media and quickly became the symbol of the "new" Afghanistan. The U.S. organized a national tribal council, or *loya jirga*, ostensibly representing a true popular consensus. In fact, delegates were bribed or threatened by the U.S. and the Alliance into appointing Karzai "interim" leader of what cynics called "Chevronistan."

The affable Karzai, a Pushtun, was merely a figurehead. Most Afghans dismissed him as "mayor of Kabul." Real power was held by a cabal of Russian-supported Tajiks from the Panjshir Valley, Massoud's old cronies, led by Gen. Mohammed Fahim, a former senior official of the dreaded communist secret police, KHAD, which tortured and murdered tens of thousands of Afghans in the 1980s, many by burning, freezing, electrocuting, skinning, and burying alive. So, in a keen historic irony, the portions of Afghanistan not under direct U.S. military control fell once again under Russian influence.

ARMED RESISTANCE AGAINST U.S. OCCUPATION FORCES AND THEIR ALLIES IS GROWING RAPIDLY.

U.S. television featured clips of smiling Afghan children waving American flags, women casting off their veils, and Kabulis disco-dancing with joy over their liberation from the Koran-thumping Taliban. This writer, however, experienced a sharp sense of *déjà vu*, having seen it all before during the Soviet



Union's occupation of Afghanistan in the 1980s.

It took the Red Army less than a week to seize most of Afghanistan. *Pravda* and Moscow TV featured pictures of Afghan children waving little red flags and women burning their veils. Soviet agit-prop churned out endless stories about the Red Army "liberating" Afghanistan from feudalism, Islamic medievalism, or bringing education, women's rights, and prosperity to backwards Afghanistan—a shining example of what the Soviets could do for the entire Islamic world.

Moscow installed a puppet ruler in Kabul, Hafizullah Amin, protected by Soviet special forces, staged a bogus *loya jirga*, and tried to forge a government army. Up in the mountains, a few "terrorists" and "bandits" (anti-Soviet *mujihadin*) began resisting Soviet occupation forces. But it took two years before widespread armed opposition to the Soviets got under way. Even this resistance looked hopeless against the

Like the Soviets, U.S. forces quickly occupied Afghanistan. Like the Soviets, they installed a puppet regime. Americans also seem destined to discover, like the Soviets, that getting into Afghanistan is easy; the trick is getting out. Contrary to the upbeat administration propaganda being fed to the U.S. public about Afghanistan, the situation there continues to deteriorate.

Hamid Karzai is surrounded by 200 American bodyguards: his own people cannot be trusted. Karzai barely escaped being blown up last September. His vice president, warlord Hadji Kadir, an old friend and protector of this writer, was assassinated. Kabul is guarded by a force of international troops that recalls the western forces sent to defend the legations at Peking during China's 1900 Boxer Rebellion. The rest of Afghanistan, save U.S. military bases and areas under Alliance control, is in chaos. Local warlords, drug barons, and bandits rule the ethnically fragmented nation—the same situation that created the Taliban in 1994.

Armed resistance against U.S. occupation forces and their allies is growing rapidly. Taliban forces have reformed and remain under the command of Mullah Omar, whom the U.S. continues to hunt. Al-Qaeda units are in action. Tribal fighters, angered by American bombings and the sometimes arrogant deportment of U.S. troops, are supporting the Taliban. Numbers of fighters from other militant groups, all mistakenly termed "al-Qaeda" by the Pentagon and U.S. media—have joined the resistance. Anti-U.S.

*muji*hadin based just across the border in Pakistan's wild Frontier Province, where bin Laden is probably hiding, routinely cross to attack U.S. troops.

Hardly a day now passes without small-scale rocket, mortar, mining, or sniper attacks on U.S. troops. Search and destroy missions conducted by U.S. forces against elusive *muji*hadin have proven expensive failures that alienate civilians. Recently, another old acquaintance of this writer from the 1980s, Push-tun warlord Gulbadin Hekmatyar, a former foe of the Taliban, proclaimed *jihad* against U.S. forces, calling for the liberation of Afghanistan from its newest foreign occupier. Hekmatyar, whom the CIA tried to assassinate last year, was the most successful and aggressive of the seven CIA-supported *muji*hadin commanders battling Soviet occupation.

There is a curious disconnect in news from Afghanistan. Behind a veil of tightly controlled reporting, the Pentagon and U.S. media admit only a handful of American casualties and claim constant success in sweep operations. But this writer's old *muji*hadin sources, and

such prevarications do not account for the major discrepancy between U.S. war reports and those from the region.

One thing is clear. A low-intensity guerilla war against the U.S. garrison is spreading, something that goes unreported by the U.S. media, which have largely forgotten Afghanistan. Afghans are a proud, xenophobic people who resent foreigners giving them orders. So far, wads of \$100-bills dished out to tribal leaders have bought temporary co-operation, but the Soviets did the same, yet eventually found that they could no longer rent loyalty.

The Afghan invasion cost the U.S. at least \$35 billion in direct costs up to the end of 2002 not including indirect expenses, such as wear and tear, munitions replacement, and naval deployments. Current operations are costing at least \$2.5 billion per month, excluding bribes to warlords and funds for Karzai's rump regime, which is seeking \$37 billion in aid.

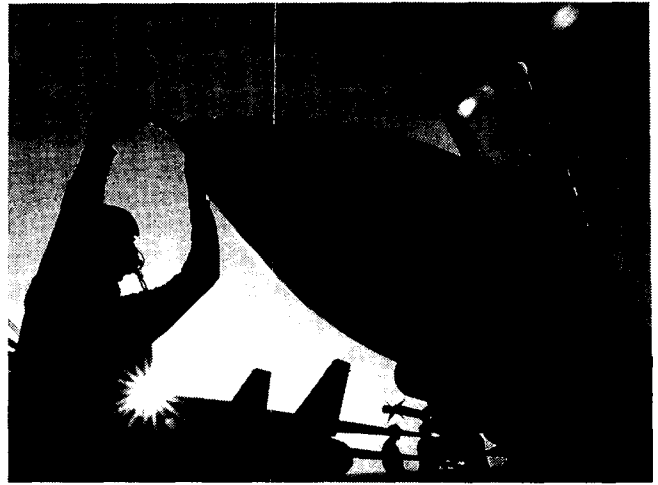
AFGHANS ARE A PROUD, XENOPHOBIC PEOPLE WHO RESENT FOREIGNERS GIVING THEM ORDERS.

field correspondents from Pakistan, Russia, India, and Iran, report rising U.S. casualties and loss of helicopters in fierce battles with Islamic militants and tribesmen.

Many U.S. combat casualties are described as accidents, and some "enemy" dead, as in a February battle, are actually civilians killed by U.S. bombing and strafing. In a major clash, Operation Anaconda in March 2002, U.S. forces were defeated and forced to retreat by the Taliban, losing eight dead and two helicopters. The Pentagon, however, described the clash as a U.S. victory. But

Add to these costs maintaining new U.S. bases in neighboring Petrolistan: Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgystan, and Pakistan, where anti-American sentiment is surging. These bases were ostensibly created to "fight terrorism," but they coincidentally happen to sit along the route of the U.S.-built and -financed pipeline that will bring oil down from the Caspian Basin south through Afghanistan to Pakistan and thence to the gas-guzzling West.

In another historic irony, Leonid Brezhnev's Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in order to open a strategic corridor south



to Pakistan and the warm waters of the Arabian Sea, so as to link, for the first time, all the Red Navy's fleets and expand Soviet power into the oil-producing Gulf and across the Indian Ocean. President Bush appears to be adopting a similar strategy, only in geographical reverse.

The U.S. military, according to confidential sources, is planning for a permanent presence in Afghanistan and neighboring Central Asia "to combat terrorism." The real mission is to dominate Caspian oil. But staying long in Afghanistan has always proven a grave error for all its invaders, from Alexander's Macedonians to the Soviet Union. Perhaps the resourceful and ingenious U.S. will succeed in imposing lasting imperial control on Afghanistan. But given the upsurge in fighting and growing antagonism to America's presence, it is more likely that the bellicose Afghans will once again launch a *jihad* against their latest "liberator."

This renewed *jihad* will be a modest, low-intensity affair but one that bleeds the U.S. treasury and military. Osama bin Laden has said many times that the mighty U.S. can only be defeated and driven from the Muslim world by dragging it into a score of small but debilitating guerilla conflicts. Afghanistan is clearly the first. Iraq promises to be the second. "Liberated" Baghdad could soon look very much like U.S.-run Kabul, an island of western neo-colonial rule in a sea of disorder and violence. ■

Eric S. Margolis is the author of War at the Top of the World: The Struggle for Afghanistan and Asia and a columnist, commentator, and war correspondent.

The Misunderstood Adam Smith

The father of free trade was no globalist.

By R. B. Calco

ADAM SMITH IS COMMONLY regarded as the father of modern economics. Free traders claim he is also the father of free trade and credit him with the first systematic attack on government regulation of trade ever written.

This is true as far as it goes. This is not to say, however, that Adam Smith was a free trader in the same sense that the term is promoted today. Since David Ricardo and the Austrians took hold of it, the term has acquired a dimension and a purpose that was, to paraphrase Smith, no part of his intention. Or, in any event, it was no part of his definition.

Smith's argument for trade was rooted in what economists today refer to as "Absolute Advantage"; it was left to the crafty mind of David Ricardo half a century later to invent a justification for trade on the basis of the far more subjective "Comparative Advantage" that today the economists tell us we need to consider instead.

While the dull, pencil-headed, pocket calculator logic of Comparative Advantage works fine for the textbook laboratory example of two nations and two products, it falls apart entirely the minute real-world constraints or considerations are introduced. It becomes absurd when you attempt to factor "comparative advantage" across three nations and three products, let alone the hundreds of nations and millions of products of the real world. Try it—you will lose your mind.

All Comparative Advantage amounts to, reduced to its essential components, is a sophistic argument for international

division of labor—for global economic union—without dealing with any issues of political union. It is the economic equivalent of living in sin, so to speak. For whatever intuitive sense it claims to have, this argument relies on a fundamental confusion between trade—economic activity between economic systems—and division of labor—economic activity between individuals in a single economic system.

At bottom, this argument is a bait-and-switch for a global system, not a plan for any one nation to become wealthy, least of all the United States, which, according to the law of equilibrium, would be forced under a free-trade regime to sustain massive losses of jobs and wealth to pull all other nations up in the new global wage and price structure.

Precisely that is happening today. Five-year planners for the various failed socialist regimes of the 20th century attempted to divine all human activity within their sphere according to a similarly flawed economic calculus that they labeled "scientific socialism." Comparative Advantage is rooted in the very same flawed "labor theory of value" as Marx's scientific socialism. And it reeks of an arrogant, academic do-good-ism, as if government-appointed econometrics majors, and not business people, are more competent to discern what nations, not individuals, should be producing and how much.

Nor did Smith have the opportunity to see what the American founders, who were struggling more or less contemporaneously to create a new nation from

scratch, added to his ideas. Our founders (unlike our modern professorial elite) really did read Smith's famous 1776 treatise *The Wealth of Nations* before they embarked upon the Union. Alexander Hamilton's work in particular reveals Smith's clear influence on his reasoning, as in his *Report on Manufactures*.

Interestingly, virtually no one since Hamilton has really bothered to inquire, after the manner of Smith, into the "nature and causes" of American wealth. Today such matters are spoken of as a metaphysical given, and often-metaphysical justifications are produced to explain it. While God has truly blessed our nation, it was sound economics that transformed us in less than one century from a backwards, agrarian hodgepodge of disparate colonies into the economic powerhouse of all time.

Intrepid researchers soon learn that our founders instituted a deliberate program of development and national self-sufficiency with the very first law on the books of the very first Congress. The founders were inspired by the genuine insights of Smith the economist.

This program of self-sufficiency was based on the tariff revenue system. Rather than attempting to regulate the minutiae of trade to the benefit of any one particular industry of the moment, which is what tariffs in the past had unwisely been used to attempt to do, they wisely and simply defined the American market in a deliberate fashion to encourage *all* American industry and manufactures. They asked foreigners to pay a flat, *ad valorem* percentage "cover

charge" for access into that market. Internally, the American market was a genuine free trade zone ("free trade" being understood here properly as "division of labor," not trade in the international sense free traders tend to confuse).

And the best part of all? Americans paid no income tax whatsoever for the first 150+ years of the Republic; instead, foreigners paid the entire revenue of the United States for the privilege to do business here. If they moved here, of course, they paid nothing at all.

ADAM SMITH SAW FIT TO OBSERVE HOW FORTUNATE IT WAS THAT AN INVISIBLE HAND GUIDED PEOPLE NATURALLY TO PREFER DOMESTIC OVER FOREIGN INDUSTRY.

Moreover, no great skill in literary interpretation is required to discern, if one would but read Smith in the original, that the modern interpretation of his famed "invisible hand" passage is patently false.

Smith would have advised the peoples of the world to do what human nature or Providence or whatever he meant by the invisible hand already guides them to do: support their domestic industry. If you are American, buy American; if you are Russian, buy Russian; and so on. For this is the way to prosperity.

That's the real message of the invisible hand and the entire preceding 300-page discussion on the uses of capital, not that cheap Hollywood wisdom of Gordon Gecko that counsels every capitalist to glorify greed as good and self-interest as the ultimate moral imperative.

His thesis was that of the three high-level uses of capital available to a nation for the purpose of creating national wealth—domestic production for domestic consumption, domestic production for foreign consumption, and foreign production for domestic consumption—domestic production

for domestic consumption is *twice* as efficient as either of the other two. Adam Smith saw fit to observe, upon concluding that argument, how fortunate it was that an invisible hand guided people naturally to prefer domestic over foreign industry, even if it was more expensive. For this, he concludes, is how wealth accumulates to a nation. And it is in this context, and only in this context, that his invisible hand passage makes any sense.

Yet we have taught our children differently. We have taught them to buy

Japanese if it's cheaper and not to worry about American workers. They will find new jobs elsewhere once the market or the government figures out what to do with them.

And his conclusion is further supported by, believe it or not, the pro-free-trade Austrians, who in their sober moments, when not proselytizing on the issue of free trade, identified the *per capita* capital investment in labor as the sole determinant of a nation's standard of living.

Considered in light of Smith's insight regarding the uses of capital and the Austrian insight regarding standards of living, is it any wonder America became the most mighty economic force on the planet during a relatively short period when it actively protected and encouraged its domestic industry? That is to say, when our government promoted capital investment in support of domestic over foreign labor? And is it really any wonder why in a similarly short period of time, with the policy of "free trade," America's once powerful industrial base has since been all but scrapped and our economic security

slashed in half such that now two incomes are needed just to make ends meet for the average family?

While Smith was brutal in his attack on government bureaucrats who would pretend to know better than a private citizen how best his needs can be met. Smith operated under the assumption that everybody, yes, even capitalists, was fundamentally patriotic and well meaning, even if he occasionally confused his narrow interest with the public good. Modern global culture, nurtured by an ideology of global capitalism no less virulent and ambitious than the ideology of global communism with which it locked horns in the last century, has done much to undermine that assumption.

The great goal of a nation's political economy, according to Smith, is simply "to increase the power and riches of that country"—not, as some seem to think today, to make the world safe for transnational corporations and globalist institutions of command and control.

Once the baby-boom generation comes of retirement age, and the pressures on government spending eclipse the earning capabilities of the remaining working population, maybe then, after everything is broken and America's tragic industrial collapse can no longer be whitewashed at the Office of Management and Budget as it has been on Wall Street and the boardrooms of Enron—maybe then the unthinkable will become thinkable again.

Maybe, just maybe, America will be ready to return to principles of truly limited government, economic patriotism, and resolve to rebuild the only free market economy that matters to us, or should matter to us: our own. That's self-interest the way Smith theorized it and our Founders practiced it. ■

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[freedom is slavery]

Surveillance State

The government is watching—because it can.

By Fred Reed

SOME BELIEVE THAT technology is a tool we use to suit our purposes. Actually, it uses us. More accurately, instead of facilitating our behavior, technology determines it: we use a given technology in the only way it can be used. Invent the automobile, and roads inevitably follow—and suburbs and shopping malls and finally a different ordering of society.

In the case of information technology, technological inevitability probably makes inescapable, if not a police state, at least a surveillance state.

People and governments do what is easy and convenient. Those who would never steal a book will copy CDs without hesitation, which is to say that technology has determined morality. Similarly, the lack of technology can determine morality. In particular, the freedom Americans have enjoyed has been less the result of American character than of governmental incapacity.

In the past, the government didn't watch us carefully because it couldn't. In 1950, the FBI could open your mail, or tap your telephone, but only with effort and risk of being caught. Consequently, it did so only in cases of importance.

The staggering capacities of today's computers and networks change things utterly. These are so powerful, offer such convenience, and fill so many benign purposes that their penetration of society, already great, will increase.

We can't stop it. Perhaps more correctly, we won't stop it. An unintended consequence is to establish detailed surveillance of our entire lives.

Three things in particular conduce to this end: first, the proliferation of databases. We have become so accustomed to databases that we cease to notice them. Let us refresh our attention. Countless commercial enterprises can find your records in seconds—telephone companies, banks, credit card operations, hospitals. So can the police, the IRS, the Department of Motor Vehicles, the Veterans Administration. This is convenient. It saves your time and cuts their costs. There are thousands of such databases, many of which you don't know

put everything about you at the fingertips of corporals on the Potomac. It is absolutely possible, and they absolutely want to do it. Congress may not permit it. If so, then the linking will proceed more slowly, step by step, for reasons of convenience and efficiency.

Third, the exponential increase in means and effectiveness of surveillance. Five years ago, if I had spoken of chips implantable beneath your skin to transmit your social security number silently to listening devices in your surroundings, you would have suggested Thorazine and a strait jacket. They exist—for benign purposes. Verichip Corporation sells them for people with serious medical problems. With a wand the paramedic on

THE FREEDOM AMERICANS HAVE ENJOYED HAS BEEN THE RESULT OF GOVERNMENTAL INCAPACITY.

about. Their intentions are seldom nefarious. The capacity of such collections, and the ability to search them quickly, is without practical limit. Google indexes billions of web pages. A search takes a second.

Second, the ease of networking. Tying all these databases together, while initially a daunting exercise in programming, is not technically difficult. This is what the Pentagon looks to do in its proposed Total Information Awareness effort—to

the scene reads the patient's identifying number, which indexes instantly into a remote database containing his medical records. You can have one implanted in your dog. Benign. Convenient.

These RFID chips (radio-frequency identification) are roughly the size of a grain of rice and in quantity might cost five cents apiece. They need no batteries. Harmless uses can be imagined by the dozen. For example, instead of standing in line at the department store,

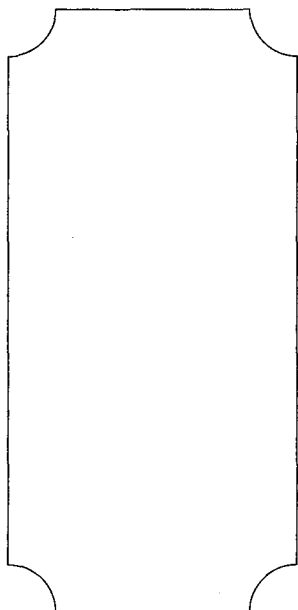
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a scanner could read the RFID tag of the items you wanted to buy, as well as the RFID tag in your credit card. The purchase would be automatically charged to your account. No muss, no fuss, no waiting. Sounds nice.

Companies like Gillette, Wal-Mart, and Procter and Gamble are looking at buying hundreds of millions of RFID tags to be attached to merchandise for inventory control. Europeans are considering putting them in banknotes. Inevitably there will be pressure to put them in cars to facilitate warranty work, in ID cards, in everything. By their nature they are read automatically by any nearby reader.

And so we could, and very well may, become trackable throughout our lives, barely being aware of it, with the information going to places yet to be determined.

RFID is merely part of a larger technological trend. We all know of the cameras at intersections that photograph the license plates of speeders. Software can be made to read the numbers without human intervention. The police, who do not at all want a police state, will argue for reading all numbers to find stolen cars, a legitimate aim. They will say that there is no expectation of privacy in a license plate, that if a cop can stand on the corner and read your plates, doing it automatically is no different.

But it is. Massive, around-the-clock, automated, centralized surveillance is qualitatively different from a cop glancing at a license plate. Will it happen? We are told not, as we were told that social security numbers would be used only for Social Security. But they were so very convenient for other purposes.

As e-mail becomes the normal means of communication, the federal capacity to watch increases astronomically. Screening your e-mail for addresses or content, diverting a copy without your knowledge to police headquarters, is child's play. This is what the FBI's Carni-

vore software does. When you cross our borders, your passport is swiped through a reader. If foreign governments choose to co-operate, as they eventually will, your movements abroad will be tracked.

Does this really matter? I think it does, for several reasons. First, it is intimidating. Simply knowing that your e-mail is being read and saved, that the night you spent at that gay bar or topless joint is on record, that your reading habits at Amazon or the library can be dredged up is chilling—even for the innocent. For people who might be on the wrong side of the government, for example journalists, it is worse. Nobody is without things that could be used against him.

Second, when justified by the pretext of combating terrorism, surveillance encourages mindless abuse. An examination of my Internet habits would show that I often go to sites dealing with bioterrorism, terrorist groups, explosives, synthesis of nerve agents, that I read books about the Taliban. I travel to strange places and correspond with people who have practical knowledge of such subjects. I have a concealed carry permit for Virginia, own firearms, and often use them. Does the machine kick out my name, whereupon the goons show up?

Third, ever-increasing capacity to watch provides the machinery of a Stalinism beyond Uncle Joe's most libidinous dreams. For a while, requirements for warrants (already weakened by the Patriot Act) and such may prevent the more horrendous forms of abuse. But there is nothing magical in the American character to reject a creeping totalitarianism. If you doubt this, go to an airport.

Watching is getting easier, fast. And what is easy is usually done. ■

Fred Reed's writing has appeared in the Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, Harper's, and National Review, among other places.

Arts & Letters

FILM

[*Road to Perdition*]

An Average Hitman

By Steve Sailer

"ROAD TO PERDITION" is out this week on DVD and VHS. It made \$104 million at the domestic box office and received six Oscar nominations, one for supporting actor Paul Newman and the rest in craft categories. The nomination of Thomas Newman (no relation to Paul) for Best Original Score is the 79th nomination earned by the Newman clan of composers, the Bachs of Hollywood. Despite its technical excellence, "Road to Perdition" missed out on any Oscar nods in the Big Three categories of Picture, Director, or Actor.

Over the last decade, Tom Hanks's batting average at choosing strong projects has been as high as any actor's ever. He stars in movies that are often innovative, well made, and always popular. His talismanic prestige drew tremendous talent to this solemn, slow-moving story of a soulful hitman who works for the Downstate Illinois Irish mob in 1931.

The sterling supporting cast includes Paul Newman as his conflicted boss who must choose between betraying his beloved protégé (Hanks) or his own rotten son (Daniel Craig). Stanley Tucci is superbly suave as Al Capone's lieutenant Frank Nitti, to whom both gangsters turn for help. The normally fascinating Jennifer Jason Leigh has a negligible part. And Jude Law overplays "The Reporter," an evil assassin dispatched to murder Hanks's noble assassin.

Visually gifted director Sam Mendes is back following his Oscar-winning debut "American Beauty." The late cameraman Conrad L. Hall's sumptuous cinematography garnered him his 10th Oscar nomination. Their painterly tableaux are memorable, yet static, as if they were filming each panel in a comic book.

The wintry darkness of the first hour will remind you of how discouraging the Depression was. Fortunately, the sun comes out as Hanks and his son flee for weeks toward Perdition, teaching each other the usual Important Life Lessons as they bond along the way. This metaphorical town's setting amidst the glorious Sleeping Bear sand dunes on Michigan's west coast makes for a striking climax.

Yet nothing demonstrates the geekification of American culture more than that all these master craftsmen assembled to make what turns out to be another comic book flick. To be precise, "Perdition" is based on long-time "Dick Tracy" writer Max Allan Collins's "graphic novel," a term that means "a long, pretentious, and expensive comic book."

"Perdition" has the same old illogical plotting, countless killings, absence of real women, passionate but puerile psychology, and a lack of sociological insight that you expect from a comic book aimed at youths.

You would appreciate the film's numerous pleasures more if you know ahead of time that "Road to Perdition" is fundamentally absurd.

For instance, Hanks wants to find and kill the man who shot up his family, but Capone's gang is hiding him. So our hero devises the brilliant plan of persuading the Chicago Outfit to see his side of the issue by repeatedly stealing Al Capone's money. Warning: Kids, the Chicago mob might not be in its prime anymore, but, still, do not try this in Illinois.

Also, Law's character, the reporter, is a psycho supervillain straight out of "Batman." He shoots people with his gun, then with his camera, and sells the gory crime scene pictures to the tabloids.

Hanks's normal on-screen persona as an average American Joe, who succeeds by drawing on reserves of character he did not know he had, is intimately connected to his inspiring real-life growth from just another funnyman to perhaps Hollywood's finest citizen, a champion of the bourgeois virtues. For example, he sacrificed tens of millions of dollars in acting salaries to oversee his two patriotic mini-series "From the Earth to the Moon" and "Band of Brothers."

Hanks is a classic baby boomer turned father, one who feels guilty over letting his career come before the two kids he had with his first wife. So he is working extra hard to raise his two younger children right. You can see the emotional appeal of the role to Hanks. He plays a sober, hard-working, faithful husband and provider. His biggest sin (well, except for murdering people) is being a little emotionally withdrawn around his sons. In a touching scene, no doubt straight out of the star's own current home life, but anachronistic for his character's, he apologizes to his nine-year-old for having to miss his school concert.

Unfortunately, the family man elements that attracted Hanks make his character ludicrous. My part-Irish wife grew up on Chicago's West Side. She laughed at the depiction of the Irish hitman's family life as fond but overly formal: "Don't you think that a devout Irish Catholic father who is also a contract killer might drink a little more?" ■

Rated R for violence and bad words.

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BOOKS

[*The Right Man: The Surprise Presidency of George W. Bush*, David Frum, Random House, 303 pages]

Axis of Ego

By Robert D. Novak

EYEBROWS WERE RAISED in Washington at the beginning of George W. Bush's administration when a prominent Canadian journalist named David Frum was hired as bottom banana on the new president's speechwriting team. The reason for that surprise is supplied by Frum himself in *The Right Man*.

When chief Bush speechwriter Michael Gerson first made his offer, Frum writes, "I believed I was unsuited to the job he was offering me. I had no connection to the Bush campaign or the Bush family. I had no experience in government and little of political campaigns. I had not written a speech for anyone other than myself. And I had been only a moderately enthusiastic supporter of George W. Bush ... I strongly doubted he was the right man for the job."

What's more, as Frum explains, "I was a Canadian citizen when I entered the White House." Nor did he represent any wing of the Republican Party. While identifying himself as a conservative, his first book, *Dead Right* (1994), expressed intense dissatisfaction with supply-siders, evangelicals, and nearly all Republican politicians. He had first attracted major American attention in 1991 with a mean-spirited, unjustified accusation of Pat Buchanan practicing "sly anti-Semitism."

In a White House unusually suspicious of outsiders, Gerson ushered in Frum apparently because he regarded him as an insightful intellectual (M.A. Yale, J.D. Harvard) and a stylish writer.

As Frum tells it, he felt that "if only for a little while, I would like to look out from the inside."

But not for too long. He was gone in 13 months, soon after Bush's war against terrorism was launched. It took only six more months to grind out the book, and it was in the bookstores by January. A public hungry to learn more about the president immediately propelled *The Right Man* to number two on the *New York Times* best-seller list, in no small part because Frum had won nationwide notoriety as the self-identified author of Bush's famous "axis of evil" formulation.

Did Frum enter the White House for the express purpose of writing this book, and did he help along that project by breaking the unwritten speechwriter's code of not advertising your work? That speculation is inescapable, but there is also reason for a darker thought about Frum's motives.

For much of this book, Frum seems disengaged from Bush's policies. He refers to the president's "energy plan fiasco," calling it "an incoherent mess" and a "pseudoscandal." He contends Bush "could never quite bring himself to deny that climate change was very likely real and man-made." He says of Bush's faith-based initiative, "instead of drawing new people to the Republican Party, it had repelled them." Prior to Sept. 11, 2001, writes Frum,

I began avoiding parties where I expected the questions [of Bush's capacity for the presidency] to be posed too persistently by conservative friends, for I was not sure I would know how to answer.

But after the terrorist attack on America, Frum sees Bush in a new light—as "the right man" to lead the nation. The sophisticated, detached journalist becomes the ardent advocate of carrying the war to Iraq and supporting Israel's position. The wisecracking outsider who belittles his White House colleagues becomes a fervent supporter of Israel's Prime Minister Ariel Sharon.

While Frum calls himself "a not especially observant Jew," he repeatedly refers to his Jewishness. It is hard to recall any previous presidential aide so engrossed with his own ethnic roots. Frum is more uncompromising in support of Israel than any other issue, raising the inescapable question of whether this was the real reason he entered the White House.

This is a strange memoir in many ways. An aide just off the payroll and hungry for fame might be expected to "kiss and tell," but the truth is that Frum did precious little kissing there to tell about.

Senior colleagues say Frum had personal contact with Bush on no more than three or four occasions, and he does not seem to understand George W. Bush very well. Of a president who may be more basically conservative than Ronald Reagan, Frum writes, "He was not at all an ideological man." He contends Bush "does curiously resemble [John F.] Kennedy"; as someone who knew both, I can think of no two more dissimilar men.

Especially at the beginning, *The Right Man* reads more a Sunday newspaper feature than an insider's memoir—but written with a tone of condescension. "Conspicuous intelligence seemed actively unwelcome in the Bush White House," he writes, especially when compared with the Clinton White House.

Halfway through, the book takes a turn. "There was no domestic agenda" after the terrorist attacks, Frum writes, ignoring Bush's broad range of policy proposals. He also ignores the president's foreign policy positions. While Bush took a balanced view of Indian-Pakistani violence in the Kashmir, Frum writes, "The Indians showed amazing restraint in the face of Pakistani-based terror." While the official position praised Saudi support in the war on terrorism, Frum accused the kingdom of being determined to "incubate deranged fanatics bent on jihad."

Frum assails "foreign policy bureaucrats" in the State Department and CIA who were "most eager to appease the

Arab oil states" and compares Secretary of State Colin Powell's desire to maintain "the Middle Eastern status quo" with George B. McClellan's caution in the Civil War. Clinton holdover officials are blamed for President Bush's endorsement of former Sen. George Mitchell's (D-Maine) report advocating a mutual cease-fire between Israelis and Palestinians. "Since the Mitchell report blamed the war on Israel for not offering even more concessions than it did," Frum writes, "a ban on contradicting Mitchell was a ban on expressing any meaningful support for Israel."

Insensibly, the book becomes a brief for Sharon's Israeli policy. Bush may have decided in favor of a Palestinian state, but not Frum. "One of my speechwriting colleagues put it nicely: 'Let's see: they kill six thousand Americans [the best estimate of the casualties at that time], and we give the Palestinians a state. If they kill six thousand more

tends its distribution was smaller than it was, and complains, implausibly, about "interception of personal letters."

The anticlimax was his account of the conclusion of whatever personal relationship we had. He describes me as a "dangerous character" who "menacingly" asked him to lunch as a news source—implying we had no previous relationship. Actually, thanks to his friendship with my future son-in-law, he was a guest at my daughter's wedding, and later he invited me to a large dinner party at his spacious home, where I was given a place of honor at the host's table.

On the day that Frum left the White House, I broke the news on CNN and reported "suspicion he's been kicked out," while reporting that both he and presidential aides said the move was voluntary. Frum, a man of inherited wealth, disingenuously writes that he contemplated a libel suit to "finance [his] children's education."

FRUM EXPRESSED RESTLESSNESS AT BEING LOW MAN ON THE SPEECHWRITING TOTEM POLE, OF SEEING HIS PROSE DISCARDED, AND OF LOSING HIS FEELING AS A JOURNALIST OF PERFORMING A HONEST DAY'S WORK FOR A HONEST DAY'S PAY. WHAT HE DID NOT DISCLOSE TO ME OR TO THE PRESIDENT WERE HIS PRIVATE PLANS AND HIS PERSONAL AGENDA.

Americans, do we give Palestinians twice as big a state?" If Frum purported to present Bush warts and all, Sharon was wart-less. Could Bush, Frum asked, "condemn Israel for doing in the West Bank exactly what he was doing in Afghanistan?"

The climax of *The Right Man* is what made David Frum a Washington celebrity. His wife, writer Danielle Crittenden, sent e-mails to a wide circle of friends saying, "my husband is responsible for the [axis of evil] phrase" and expressing "hope you'll indulge my wifely pride" (though Frum's original words were "axis of hate"). In the book, Frum does not quote his wife's actual e-mail, pre-

Before his "axis of evil" coup, Frum at our luncheon expressed restlessness at being low man on the speechwriting totem pole, of seeing his prose discarded, and of losing his feeling as a journalist of performing a honest day's work for a honest day's pay. What he did not disclose to me and what he did not disclose to the president were his private plans and his personal agenda. As his book indicates, those are characteristics to be avoided in a presidential speechwriter. ■

Robert D. Novak is a syndicated columnist for the Chicago Sun-Times and a CNN commentator.

[*The Skeptic: A Life of H.L. Mencken*, Terry Teachout, HarperCollins, 432 pages]

Mencken and His Enemies

By Daniel McCarthy

RESPECTABLE OPINION THESE days has it that H.L. Mencken was a great prose stylist and, in connection with that, one of the greatest American journalists of the 20th century, but not a man whose ideas should be taken seriously. To his credit, Terry Teachout does not entirely subscribe to this view in *The Skeptic*, his biography of Mencken; he recognizes that "in Mencken, style and content are one." But in an unfortunate irony, Teachout himself has produced the kind of work that respectable opinion attributes to Mencken. *The Skeptic* is fine writing in the service of dubious thinking.

There is nothing wrong with *The Skeptic's* narrative or the clean, engaging prose in which it is written. Its scale is also appropriate: Teachout has done well to limit himself to a work of under 400 pages, and in that space he covers the facts of Mencken's life remarkably thoroughly. This itself is an achievement, given how prolific a writer Mencken was: between his days as a cub reporter for the *Baltimore Herald* in 1899 and the stroke that ended his writing career in 1948, Mencken produced millions of words of journalism and correspondence, as well as writing over a dozen books. His output was varied as well as large, including the first books in English on George Bernard Shaw and Friedrich Nietzsche, a pioneering study of "the American language" in a book by that name, and volumes on religion (*Treatise on the Gods*), politics (*Notes on Democracy*), and the fairer sex (*In Defense of Women*). Teachout discusses all of these works and relates the details of Mencken's personal life in an effective, economical

fashion. There have been longer, more detailed accounts of Mencken's life and times, but none has had the elegance of *The Skeptic*.

Which makes it all the more regrettable that Teachout should fail to transcend the mere facts themselves to provide an insightful interpretation of his subject's life and work. Without

iron Club dinner where both Mencken and President Franklin Roosevelt addressed the elite of Washington's press corps. Mencken delivered an uncharacteristically mild diatribe against the president. The president, however, when his turn came to speak, had a humiliating surprise in store for Mencken: Roosevelt's remarks were

And by making this the prologue to his biography, Teachout trivializes Mencken's political thinking.

Still, Teachout has studied his subject too closely to fail to see that Mencken's indisputably masterful style is closely related to his thought, which might be characterized as a kind of Nietzschean libertarianism. Mencken loved German culture, hated U.S. intervention in foreign wars, held most of mankind in sterling contempt, and thought of government as a conspiracy against the superior man. Teachout has some trouble reconciling all of this with Mencken's style and as a result becomes a rather schizophrenic critic. On a single page he writes both that the power of Mencken's work "is less a function of his particular convictions than of the firmly balanced prose rhythms and vigorous diction in which they are couched" and that "his charm is inseparable from his habits of thought. However perverse or excessive his underlying ideas may be, they retain much of their impelling force." Unable to make up his own mind, Teachout resorts to characterizing Mencken as "incoherent" and "self-contradictory," without providing much evidence for such claims. It is true that Mencken was not a political systematizer, but his disdain for activist government at home and abroad knew few exceptions. There was nothing particularly inconsistent about Mencken's philosophy, rudimentary though it may have been.

Teachout fares a little better in his assessment of Mencken's merits as a literary critic. He is unquestionably right that Mencken's early books on Shaw and Nietzsche are nothing special. And Teachout's criticisms of Mencken as editor of the *American Mercury* are persuasive, at least in part: Teachout documents how far Mencken went in re-writing the submissions of others to resemble his own style, turning the magazine at times into practically a parody of his own work. On the other hand, Teachout does not give Mencken enough credit for allowing his magazines—the *American Mercury* and earlier the *Smart Set*—to take seriously develop-

HE MEASURES MENCKEN BY THE STANDARDS OF TODAY AND UNSURPRISINGLY FINDS HIM WANTING. THIS IS TRUE WHERE MENCKEN'S SUPPOSED ANTI-SEMITISM—UNREMARKABLE IN HIS DAY, UNFORGIVABLE IN OURS—IS CONCERNED.

belittling Mencken's thought to the degree that others have of late, Teachout still does not venture far from the respectable critical consensus. He still measures Mencken by the standards of today's political and literary climate and unsurprisingly finds him wanting. This is certainly true where Mencken's supposed anti-Semitism—unremarkable in his day, unforgivable in ours—is concerned, but it is no less true when Teachout turns his attention to Mencken's political beliefs and taste in literature. Indeed, the way Teachout tells it, Mencken was a man out of touch even with his own time—deaf to jazz, blind to the merits of modern art, and naïvely reactionary in his politics. That Teachout should disagree with Mencken's politics and criticism is one thing; the problem is that Teachout sees these differences as evidence of intellectual failure on Mencken's part. Within the elite media and political circles of latter-day New York and Washington, in which Teachout travels, views like Mencken's are unthinkable and can only be accounted for as willful ignorance or else perhaps as a sign of mental illness. Taken seriously, Mencken is well beyond the present limits of permissible dissent.

So Mencken is not taken seriously. The trouble with *The Skeptic* begins with its prologue, in which Teachout dramatizes an episode at the 1934 Grid-

lifted verbatim from Mencken's own polemics against the press. Mencken was furious, and even some of the president's allies thought he had gone too far. On its own merits this is an interesting anecdote, but why does Teachout include it at the very beginning of his book? Presumably he does it in order to provide support for assertions like this one a little later in the prologue:

Blinded partly by his hatred of Roosevelt and partly by his familial affection for German culture (Mencken was Saxon on his father's side, Bavarian on his mother's), he adopted an isolationist line that at its worst was rigid and callous beyond belief: "I find it difficult to work up any regret for the heroes butchered in World War II. Anyone silly enough to believe in such transparent quacks as Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill leaves the world little the loser by departing from it."

In an interview with *National Review Online*, Teachout said that this remark of Mencken's was "the most offensive thing he ever wrote." By using the Grid-iron Club story to introduce it, Teachout gives the impression that Mencken's attitude toward Roosevelt and World War II derived from personal pique, rather than from careful consideration.

ments in the arts that he personally disliked. The *American Mercury* was the first serious magazine to review jazz, which Mencken hated. This willingness to publish criticism at odds with his own tastes should go some way toward mitigating the faults of Mencken's often idiosyncratic literary criticism. (He thought Theodore Dreiser's *Jennie Gerhardt* was the greatest American novel since *Huckleberry Finn*, for example.) Mencken's criticism is hardly any closer to modern sensibilities than is his politics, but since he gave the benefit of the doubt to those with whom he disagreed, today's literary critics who disagree with him might want to extend the same courtesy. Besides, the politics involved in making and breaking literary reputations is even more treacherous than politics of the strictly ideological sort. Mencken's judgments on art and literature may yet one day enjoy a return to fashion.

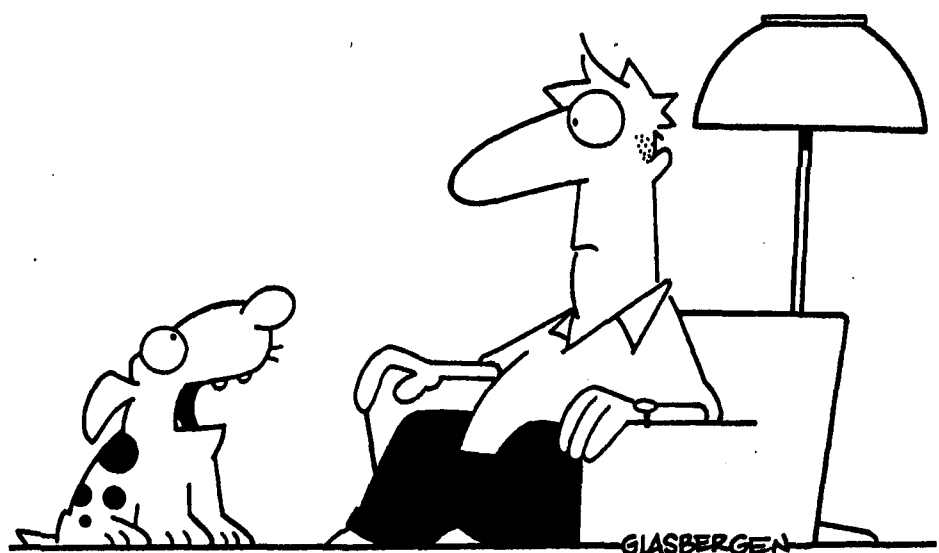
Whatever the faults of his treatment of Mencken's politics and criticism, Teachout at least does not belabor his points on these matters or treat them at undue length. The same cannot be said about his discussion of Mencken's anti-Semitism, which consumes many acres worth of text in the later chapters of *The Skeptic*. It is all a lot of hand-wringing on Teachout's part. The facts are in no dispute: Mencken wrote unpleasant things about Jews as a group and Judaism as a religion, at length in his diaries and more sparingly in his published works. Set against this, Mencken did not discriminate against Jews when hiring—his assistant on the *American Mercury* was Jewish—and when Hitler's persecution of Jews became known, Mencken proposed giving all of Germany's Jews asylum in the United States. There were also many Jews whom Mencken personally helped flee to America. Teachout rebukes Mencken for failing to speak out more publicly against the Holocaust, but here Teachout's sense of history fails him. Mencken's silence on the Holocaust is not remarkable; few Americans in the late 1940s realized its significance or knew of its extent.

Teachout looks over the evidence and decides that Mencken was an anti-Semite. It is not an unreasonable conclusion, although it is one that requires Mencken's words and private thoughts to count for more than his actions; it reduces anti-Semitism to a species of thought-crime. But the case can certainly be made, and considering the importance that so many of Mencken's earlier biographers and critics have attached to his views on Jews, it is certainly understandable that Teachout would treat the matter seriously. What is objectionable is the excessive amount of space Teachout devotes to ruminating on Mencken's anti-Semitism, when Mencken's animus against religion in general and Christianity in particular—a prejudice much more central to his life and work—receives hardly any attention. Here again Teachout has let contemporary concerns override the themes that actually mattered most in Mencken's life and work, his disdain for evangelical Christians chief among them.

Some reviews have said that *The Skeptic* is more of an extended literary essay than a biography. That is not true: *The Skeptic*, while not comprehensive,

is very good strictly on the level of basic biography. Ignoring the tendentious prologue and Teachout's sermonizing in later chapters, *The Skeptic* serves as a good introduction to Mencken. But that alone is not enough to justify another Mencken biography, and Teachout did not set out to write just another book about "the sage of Baltimore." For this book to succeed, Teachout had to distinguish himself from past biographers by providing a special insight into Mencken's life. Teachout hoped that his professional kinship with Mencken—for like him, Teachout is an experienced journalist and critic—would supply that insight, but it has not. Had Teachout taken Mencken on his own terms, even while disagreeing with him, *The Skeptic* might have succeeded and become the best Mencken biography yet. But as it is, the best that can be said of this book is that it is rather like Mencken's own works on Shaw and Nietzsche: stylish, but not an important contribution to the understanding of its subject. ■

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"You won't let me drink from the toilet, you scold me when I clean my private parts, and you tell me to shut up when I bark! Is there no tolerance for cultural diversity in this house?!"

[The Eagle's Shadow: Why America Fascinates and Infuriates the World, Mark Hertsgaard, Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 246 pages]

America Through Foreign Eyes

By David Gordon

MARK HERTSGAARD KEEPS getting in the way of his own excellent plan. He contends that Americans know very little about foreign countries. Owing to this ignorance, we fall into many mistakes; but at least partial salvation lies at hand. Our author is a foreign correspondent of vast experience, and he possesses the knowledge lacking in more insular Americans. He will instruct us in our errors: we will learn from him what foreigners think of us.

Of Hertsgaard's qualifications for his ambitious task there can be little doubt. "[M]uch of this book is based on interviews and direct observations made by the author during two extended trips around the world. The more recent trip, conducted specifically for this book ... included stops in Italy, Egypt, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Holland, Denmark, Sweden, Germany, France, England, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Spain, and Japan." Our author's earlier voyage, which took to him to an even greater number of countries, lasted no fewer than six years.

What wisdom has Hertsgaard acquired on his peregrinations? He maintains that many foreign nations view with alarm the way the United States uses its position as the world's pre-eminent power. Foreign nations resent being told to march in lockstep as the United States dictates: "An outstanding example was President Bush's first major speech after the [Sept. 11] terror attacks. Speaking before Congress on September 20, Bush declared that foreign nations had to understand that, in

the impending U.S.-led war against terrorism, 'either you are with us, or with the terrorists.' ... this was more cowboy talk, the Wild West sheriff warning, 'Do as I say or get out of town'—the very attitude that had irritated America's friends and enemies alike for decades."

Hertsgaard's point seems entirely valid, though one wonders whether it was necessary for him to carry on such a vast program of travel to learn so commonsensical a truth. Does it not apply with especial relevance to the crisis over Iraq, as America endeavors to force on a reluctant world an armed crusade against Saddam Hussein?

Hertsgaard is not slow to notice the relevance of his analysis to the Iraqi situation. "Americans are ceaselessly, and accurately, reminded that Saddam Hussein is an evil man, but not that American-enforced economic sanctions have, since 1991, caused the deaths of at least 350,000 Iraqi children and impoverished a once prosperous Iraqi middle class."

ONE WONDERS WHETHER THE AVERAGE FOREIGNER HAS GIVEN A MOMENT'S THOUGHT TO AMERICAN GUN LEGISLATION; IS NOT OUR AUTHOR AGAIN PROJECTING HIS OWN VIEWS ONTO OTHERS?

What follows from Hertsgaard's analysis? One might have thought the answer obvious. Should not America avoid interventions, like the sanctions against Iraq, which have exacerbated rather than solved an international crisis? How better to do this than to return to the traditional American policy of avoiding foreign entanglements? Then America, however powerful, could no longer in reason be viewed as an international bully.

Unfortunately, our author has a surprise in store. He disregards the upshot of his own remarks; some acts of forcible interference by the United States in the affairs of other nations, it transpires, are entirely to be praised. "When the Serbian dictator Slobodan Milosevic was orchestrating the slaugh-

ter of countless innocents ... the powers of western Europe responded with little more than pious hand-wringing. The United States did not react as quickly as it might have either, but in the end it was American firepower that stopped Milosevic." To do battle with Iraq displays the arrogance of American power; to dispatch the Yugoslav ruler by unilateral action is another matter altogether. Why, we are not told.

The answer, though, is not far to seek, and here lies the principal failing of the book. Hertsgaard imposes his own leftist agenda on the lessons he vouchsafes to us. When one of his pet causes comes on the scene, the wisdom of foreigners departs. Instead, he gives us leftist slogans of an altogether familiar kind.

He is, for example, greatly upset that industries in the United States emit "too much" greenhouse gases. Such blatant defiance of environmentalist dogma cannot pass without condemnation, and Hertsgaard weeps and wails and gnashes his teeth. But he does not derive his view

from his foreign acquaintances, many of whom have an altogether different tale to impart. For example, his Chinese contacts tell him that they would rather industrialize than observe the niceties of Green Party dogma. "The extra coal that Chinese people burned over the past two decades to prevent white walls [of iced waterdrops] in winter has had horrific environmental consequences. Nine of the ten most air-polluted cities in the world are in China."

Hertsgaard deplores America's stress on material goods. Is there not more to life than endless getting and spending? Worse yet, America is marked by great inequality of wealth. America's poor are much better off than most of the world's population, but the rich are yet still better off. Is this not cause for great concern?

Not according to many of Hertsgaard's conversation partners. They are only too anxious to join the American rat race. The chance of material gain excites them, our author's misgivings about materialism and inequality notwithstanding. "If you walked down the street here and asked people what their immediate impression of America is," a young engineer named Hany told me over lunch in Cairo in June 2001, "most of them would say, 'That's the easy life I want.'" This perspective is shared by countless other poor people around the world. Relatively few of those I have met seem to resent America's wealth."

Like nearly all leftists, Hertsgaard finds America's "gun culture" not to his liking. What is the evidence, though, that "[f]oreigners find it barbaric and frightening that average citizens are allowed to carry guns in America, even with permits, and [that] they see the nation's high rates of crime, school shootings, and murders as a predictable result of this freedom"? One wonders whether the average foreigner has given a moment's thought to American gun legislation; is not our author again projecting his own views onto others? Hertsgaard also finds fundamentalist religious doctrines deplorable, but do foreigners care very much about the religious beliefs of Americans?

Why does this objection matter? Suppose that Hertsgaard is guilty as charged; he has at times ascribed his own beliefs to others. Even so, his ideas deserve examination on their own merits. The failure of foreigners to embrace some of Hertsgaard's views hardly suffices to show those positions mistaken.

True enough, but if Hertsgaard wishes to speak on his own behalf, then he owes it to his readers to offer arguments for his ideas. He complains, for example, of "market fundamentalism" and appears to favor raising the minimum wage, but he never addresses the principal economic argument against this measure. A commonplace of elementary economics tells us that the minimum wage causes unemployment. Are the economists who hold this view—by

no means confined to "market fundamentalists"—mistaken? Our author declines to address their objection. Instead, by disguising a work of personal advocacy as a traveler's tale, he contents himself with mere assertion.

Perhaps, though, Hertsgaard has chosen wisely; his remarks about religion and philosophy do not encourage confidence in his ability to engage closely with ideas. He suggests, in familiar fashion, that Calvinism contributed to the American pursuit of wealth: Calvinism "prescribed hard work for everyone and held that an unquestioning faith in God—rather than good works—was the only path to salvation. The possession of riches was a sign that God favored a given individual ..." (This is not quite right, but never mind.)

Only a few lines later, though, he characterizes the same view as the "idea that we are rich because we are morally good." But the claim that someone is rich owing to moral merit differs entirely from the view that riches suggest that God has elected one to salvation. Indeed, the two positions are diametrically opposed, a matter that escapes our author's notice.

Who, one wonders, are the Biblical literalists who think, "the earth was created in seven days some four thousand

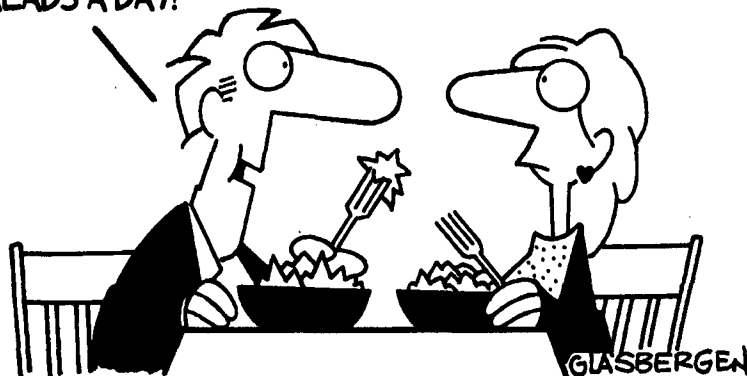
years ago"? The famous chronology of Bishop Ussher, which Hertsgaard no doubt has in mind, uses a date of 4004 BC. A small slip, perhaps, but it is characteristic of our author's inattention to those so benighted as to dissent from his liberal gospel. Again, supporters of "intelligent design" do not claim that their position is "a matter of faith." Rightly or wrongly, they think that science supports them.

Hertsgaard's lapses are by no means confined to the depiction of the doctrines of religious conservatives. He entirely misrepresents William James's colorful phrase, the "cash value" of ideas. James certainly did not maintain that if "an idea cannot make money, what good was it?" Quite the contrary, he devoted his life to theoretical inquiry.

Whatever his failings, Hertsgaard deserves great credit for his challenge in a time of war hysteria to the attempt of America's policymakers to impose their will on the world. Readers would do well to study carefully his chapter, "The Oblivious Empire" then glue the rest of the book shut. ■

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AT FIRST I DIDN'T
LIKE THE TASTE
OF THIS NEW LETTUCE,
BUT NOW I'M EATING
EIGHT SALADS A DAY!



Quietly, efficiently, and without warning, the tobacco companies switch to Plan B.

Famous Last Words

They say that nothing raises one's posthumous status more than the way one faces those last few moments before meeting what W. C. Fields called the fellow in

the bright nightgown. Oscar Wilde was witty to the bitter end (Ah, well, then I suppose I shall have to die beyond my means.), as was Voltaire. (Do you renounce the devil? Certainly not. This is no time to make new enemies.) When Saddam's final bulletin comes, and it sure is coming, the poet Heinrich Heine's exit line might apply—"God will pardon me. It's his profession"—but I would suggest the following: "My exit is the result of too many entries." (Iran, Kuwait, Kurdistan ...) Mind you, wit is probably not high among Saddam's priorities at this moment, and I doubt it ever was.

Perhaps the most famous last words in military history were those of John Sedgwick, an officer during the Civil War who announced, "They couldn't hit an elephant at this distance" and was immediately shot dead by enemy fire at the battle of Spotsylvania in May 1864. The unfortunate Sedgwick's fate illustrates the psychology of warfare—a strong tendency to underestimate the enemy's strength. No, I'm not implying that Iraq will give it the old college try. To the contrary.

After an intense 48-hour aerial bombardment by cruise missiles, other types of smart bombs and precision weapons, and close to 1,000 planes, the main invasion by American infantry and tanks will proceed north out of Kuwait on the 300-mile journey to Baghdad. I am betting my last Euro that Turkey will change its mind at the last minute with the wily Turks taking under-the-table Yankee

dollars in the billions. If my fearless predictions are correct, four U.S. army brigades will advance through Kurdish areas along with airlifted troops. The Iraqi army will disintegrate quicker than you can say Bill Kristol, the sofa Samurai who has replaced John Wayne as America's *numero uno* warrior.

The final shoot-out between white and black hats will take place at OK Baghdad, if it does take place at all. However slim, chances are that Saddam might play it safe by departing for the French Riviera, where many of his ilk reside during the winter months. Personally, I doubt it. The 13,000-strong Special Republican Guard, men mostly recruited from Saddam's own al-Bu

rible deaths in the thousands, deaths that will be blamed on the American invasion.

One thing that President Bush has managed to do is to make Saddam Hussein more popular with his own people. I have been in Europe these last few months and have spoken at length with Iraqis and other Middle Easterners. To a man, they believe that Bush going it alone with his poodle Tony Blair will have terrible consequences for the post-war region.

Unlike the 1991 Gulf War, there is no Arab coalition for this conflict and almost no regional support. The Iraqi exiles are a joke. They represent less than one percent of the people of Iraq, yet the arm-chair warriors in America speak of them as the silent majority. Make no mistake about it. The Arab street believes the war has to do with oil and imperialism rather than disarmament.

UNTIL THIS ADMINISTRATION CAME ALONG, AMERICA HID ITS IMPERIALISTIC TENDENCIES BY FIGHTING AGAINST EMPIRES SUCH AS THE SPANISH AND THE BRITISH.

Nasir tribe and home region around Tikrit, should put up resistance in door-to-door fighting in the capital, where smart bombs and tanks are useless if one cares to avoid civilian casualties. I'm betting that Saddam will die in the rubble, his last words echoing the greatness of Allah and of Iraq. If he decides to fight to the last, he will obviously use all of his arsenal, including biological and chemical weapons—if he has any, that is. The result, of course, will be that unprotected civilian Iraqis will die hor-

And it gets worse. Does anyone except for those with vested interests in the war—the neocons, Ariel Sharon, the oil companies—really think that the concept of a Western democracy can be instilled among the Iraqi people? That democracy is infectious is only a slogan. It took Europe 1,500 years to get used to it, and there is not a single Arab country that has ever enjoyed it. Do the Kristols of the world think us this dumb? America has a habit of leaving the scene, as in Vietnam, for example. Does anyone tru-

ly believe that we will sit in Iraq for the next 25 years trying to establish a democracy?

What is more likely to happen is voting by clan, which means power will pass from the less than 20 percent Sunni minority to the Shi'ite majority. The Iraqis next door also happen to be Shi'ite, which means when Sharon's—sorry, Bush's—next target, Iran, is attacked, things will not be as easy.

Ahmad Chalabi, head of the Iraqi National Congress, is a very rich exile who is sought by Jordan for massive fraud. Writing in a British newspaper not long ago, Chalabi said that "The idea that Iraq's different ethnic or religious communities will propel the country into chaos is a myth." Chalabi is eager for Bush to install him as interim head of Iraq, so he will obviously say anything that suits his purpose. Just to give you a sample of the Chalabi verse, here he is again: "Four million Iraqi exiles and three million in the liberated area of Iraqi Kurdistan support the individual rights and liberties that are commonly recognized outside Iraq." Of course they are. In Syria, in Saudi Arabia, in Kuwait, in Egypt, in fact all over the Arab world. This guy should be hired by Fox News—or the Defense Department.

What puzzles me and some of my friends over on this side of the pond is how President Bush got himself into this mess. As the sister of a victim of 9/11, Colleen Kelly, poignantly put it, "My brother was not killed by a weapon of mass destruction, nor poison gas nor by a nuke. It was 19 boxcutters that did it, and unless we address the reason these people hate us, we will never be safe." Hear, hear!

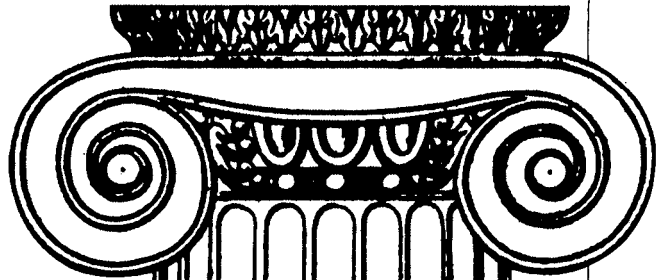
Until this administration came along,

America hid its imperialistic tendencies by fighting against empires such as the Spanish and the British. The Roman, Spanish, Dutch, French, and British empires were driven by the instinct to acquire and to rule. Now Uncle Sam has suddenly come out, flexing his muscles and declaring that he will teach the rest of the world how to live. Heaven help us. It is a universal human tendency to suffer from self-delusions, and my beloved Uncle Sam has suddenly gone senile on me.

Dr. Richard Wrangham, professor of anthropology at Harvard, points out that that it is a common illusion that all wars will be quick ones. This unrealistic belief characterized the start of the Boer War, the First World War, the Second World War, the Suez Crisis, Vietnam, Rwanda, Chechnya, and the Congo. I say Afghanistan, too.

Baghdad will fall quickly, Saddam will die amid the rubble, and the Arab world will sink into despair, grow still further in hostility towards the United States, and terrorists the world over will find thousands of young men ready to die as long as they take an American with them. Otto von Bismarck once famously said that a certain region was not worth the life of a single Pomeranian grenadier. I don't think all the sofa Samurai are worth the life of a single American soldier, or for that matter, a single innocent Iraqi.

Sam Goldwyn on his deathbed is reputed to have said, "I never thought I'd live to see the day." It is a brilliant Goldwynism, most likely made up by a wit. Maybe these should be Saddam's dying words: "I never thought I'd live to see the day—when a Bush would make me a hero." ■



"The US is being
drawn into a lengthy guerilla
war in Afghanistan" - *The Guardian*

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WAR

at the TOP OF THE WORLD

The Struggle for Afghanistan and Asia

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the TOP OF THE WORLD
The Struggle for Afghanistan, Kashmir, and Tibet
- Eric S. Margolis

REVISED & UPDATED

**A Guide to understanding Osama Bin Laden,
Al-Qaida, Afghanistan & the Indo-Pakistani Confrontation**

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